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H.R.H. THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

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THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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Vols. VI., VII., VIII., IX., X., XI., XII., XIII., XIV., XV., XVI., XVII., XVIII., XIX., XX., XXI. and XXII. of COUNTRY LIFE are now ready, and can be obtained on application to the Publisher. Price, bound in green half-morocco, 25s. per volume, or 21s. in green cloth, gilt edges. Vols. I., II., III., IV. and V. are out of print. All cheques should be made payable to the Proprietors, COUNTRY LIFE.

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THE DRAINING OF ALDEBURGH MARSHES

THE announcement that the wild tract of marshland extending from Aldeburgh to Thorp is to be reclaimed for building purposes may possibly be good news to the inhabitants, but is the reverse to lovers of Nature. It will not be received with unmitigated joy by the many people who have been drawn to the poet Crabbe's ancient borough, because its surroundings have preserved much of the wildness Crabbe described. Of late years the development of Aldeburgh has not been all improvement, from the point of view of the sentimentalist and the seeker after the picturesque; even Edward FitzGerald, who loved the place, used to complain of its having been spoilt in consequence of the demands of its summer visitors. Southward, towards sea-washed Slaughden, where Crabbe worked as a quay-labourer, the builder has taken possession of the ancient tract of dune and shingle; in the town itself some of the quaint old homes of the fishermen have made way for hotels and boarding-houses; and now its wild, and to some eyes beautiful, expanse of breezy salt marsh is to be drained and, the encroaching sea permitting, to be salt marsh no more. The change was to be anticipated; in the opinion of Aldeburgh folk it is, no doubt, highly desirable; but the writer questions whether future rambles along the Crag Path will find as much pleasure in seeing new villas and boarding-houses springing up beside it as they would in watching the redshank and the lapwing wheeling over the marsh pools, in seeing the sea-aster fringing the sea-scattered shingle and in listening to the whistle of the ringed plover as it flits from shore to marsh and from marsh to shore.

The precise nature of the fascination a tract of primitive marsh has for many Nature-lovers is not easily defined. Of George Borrow it has been said that "he could draw more poetry from a wide-spreading marsh with its straggling rushes than from the most beautiful scenery," and when he settled down to a country life it was in a little cottage on the border of the marshes; but amid all his rhapsodies on East Anglia there is scarcely a word about the wide monotonous levels with which for years he was so familiar. Thoreau, in his "Week on the Concord," is eloquent of the spell cast upon him by the river and its mysterious barges; but when he tries to give expression to the enchantment of the marshlands he can only see them vaguely through the mist of the fen. Probably, the subtle appeal of the marsh to the primitive instincts of the "child of the open air" is the secret of the spell, which the master of words finds almost as hard to explain as would the lonely fisherman of a marsh lagoon or the humble wildfowler who makes his home in an ark-like houseboat, moored in some marshland creek. The

Low belts of rushes, ragged with the blast,
Lagoons of marsh, reddening with the west;
And o'er the marsh, the waterfowl's unres',
While daylight dwindles and the dusk falls fast,

combine to give to such scenery that primeval aspect with which the prehistoric lake-dweller was familiar, and to which, perhaps, some aboriginal instinct in modern man responds when he finds himself alone amid the marshes. Or it may be that the true explanation is, as Mr. Hardy suggests, that "the time seems near, if it has not already arrived, when the chastened sublimity of a moor, a sea, or a mountain will be all of Nature that is absolutely in keeping with the moods of the more thinking among mankind."

In regard to the Aldeburgh marshland, it would be useless to urge against its reclamation its appeal to man in his more sombre or more thoughtful moods; but seeing that the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments has secured possession of a portion of Wicken Fen in order that at least one small tract of the Fen Country may retain its primitive aspect, one may ask whether some way might not have been found of preserving Aldeburgh's wild salt marsh, if only as a memorial of George Crabbe. That poet was well described by Lord Byron as being "Nature's sternest poet and her best." In depicting the wild and sterile surroundings of his native town he has given to us some most impressive pen-pictures of natural scenery. Every feature of the coast from Orford to Dunwich is, as the poet's son and biographer states, reproduced somewhere or other in his writings, and whether he is describing the gleaming ooze flats of the Alde, the arid dunes with their scanty flora, or the barren heaths, he is minute and accurate in his details. When he treats of the fens and marshes in which he loved to botanise in the days when he was earning a precarious livelihood as a doctor-apothecary he does not fail to note the

Blossoms rare, and curi'ous rush,
The gale's rich bal'n, and sun-dew's crimson blush,
Whose velvet leaf with radiant beauty drest'd,
Forms a gay pillow for the plover's breast.

Many were the days Crabbe spent in wandering amid the Aldeburgh marshes, where, like his Peter Grimes the fisherman, he would

Sadly listen to the tuneless cry
Of fishing gull or clanging golden-eye;
What time the sea-birds to the marsh would come,
And the loud bitter, from the bull-rush hoar,
Gave from the salt ditch side the bellowing boom

The bittern long ago ceased to nest in the Aldeburgh marshlands, and with the marshes the green plover and the redshank will probably disappear from the immediate neighbourhood of the town. But if the bird-lover and the botanist have cause to lament the change, local antiquaries perhaps may profit by it; for the country around Aldeburgh has produced many interesting relics of the prehistoric and Romano-British periods, and, seeing that there are barrows very near the borders of the marshes, it is not unlikely that remains of pile-dwellings may be discovered when the marsh level sinks in consequence of the withdrawal of the water. Such a discovery, if attended by the finding of other prehistoric relics, would be some compensation for the loss of one of the wildest tracts of marshland remaining on the East Anglian Coast.

Our Portrait Illustration.

IN prospect of the Royal tour in Canada, we give as our frontispiece this week a portrait of Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales.

* * It is particularly requested that no permissions to photograph houses, gardens, or livestock on behalf of COUNTRY LIFE be granted except when direct application is made from the offices of the paper. When such requests are received, the Editor would esteem the kindness of readers if they would forward the correspondence at once to him.



COUNTRY NOTES

NO Sovereign of our time is more devoted to hard work than King Edward VII. We can scarcely imagine his feeling grateful to those zealous politicians who have been suggesting in the House of Commons that a Minister of the Crown should accompany him during his holiday at Biarritz; for that means, if anything, that he would be oppressed with affairs in the middle of his hard-earned leisure. Besides, after all, King Edward, if we may say so with all possible respect, is not like the Kaiser of Germany. At any rate, so far he has never given way to any strong impulse towards writing letters or holding indiscreet conferences.

During the weeks in which the various horse shows have been going on in London, conversation has naturally turned a great deal upon the sources of our supply of horses in time of war. No one has yet made even an approximate estimate of the decrease. We know that in several large communities, such as Glasgow, mechanical power has been substituted for horses in the tramway system, which is an extensive one, and that horses are gradually being withdrawn from omnibuses and even cabs, so that these would no longer be reserves on which we could fall back in a time of emergency. Thorough-bred mares, again, are known to be diminished by our export; only between 6,000 and 7,000 are usually kept in the country, and one out of seven seems, at the lowest computation, to have been exported last year. The Government returns, too, show diminution in the number of horses.

Where shall we turn to for a supply? Several projects are in the air. Lord Egerton of Tatton has suggested that farmers should cross their Shire mares with thorough-bred blood, and so obtain a light, strong horse which would be equally suitable either for artillery regiments or for farmwork. Others look for a solution to an extension of the premium system. Many worthless foals are annually produced, for the simple reason that the farmer has not access to such good horses as are provided, for example, by the French Government. We seem to be, indeed, on the horns of a dilemma in which the choice lies between artificial encouragement and breeding by the State. At the present prices farmers never will be induced to any large extent to take up the breeding of horses to sell them when they are between four and five years of age. Perhaps if the Government could be induced to purchase at a younger age the situation would be changed.

It is probably hopeless to make any appeal to the editors of the cheap and popular newspapers who are trying to make capital out of the friction that is arising in the working of the Small Holdings Act. Considering the vast number of applications, it is surely not unreasonable that there should be many rejections; and if everyone who does not succeed in getting what he wants is encouraged to look upon himself as a martyr, life in the rural districts will become intolerable. The particular case to which we refer is that of a dairyman who was refused a holding because he had no capital beyond his stock. Now, to say anything for or against the action of the local authorities would be very foolish on the part of one who did not know the exact facts. There is, at any rate, no presumption of business capacity in favour of a man who has a milk-run and several cows and yet has been able to save no capital. One would require to know his age,

circumstances and a great deal else before pronouncing a decided opinion upon the case; yet the letters containing his application and the refusal to grant it are made public in an effort to enlist sympathy for him. We hope such a bad example will not be widely followed.

A rather lurid light on the financial prospect of Kentish hop-growing is thrown by the price at which fine hop-poles can now be purchased in that county. Poles, which a few years ago would have been well worth 14s. a hundred, are now to be picked up for about 6s. At this price they represent cheap firewood, and still cheaper material for rough-and-ready fencing, the mending of gaps and so forth. The meaning of it is, of course, that the Kentish grower is tiring of successive years in which hops do not pay, and is grubbing them up to make room for better things. In the circumstances it is evident that the same returns as heretofore are not to be expected from coppices of chestnut, which used to be quite profitable when the shoots from the stools were grown high enough for hop-poles. The effect is far-reaching, and will touch many of the families which used to supplement their poor resources by hop-picking in its season.

Towns have had their pageants, and now it seems to be the turn of the counties. Preparations are afoot for holding at Cheltenham in the course of the present year a pageant of the county of Gloucestershire. It would be unjust to the other counties to say that this particular one is more suitable for such an enterprise than they are. Nearly every man who has a sense of patriotism believes that the county to which he belongs is the most romantic, historical and beautiful in the whole country. One holds by Cornwall, another by Cumberland. The sons of "silly Suffolk" are devoted to it, but not more than are those of woody Hampshire. Without making odious comparison, however, it may be said that Gloucestershire has had a steady and romantic history. If it were not the birthplace of our greatest poet, it lay next door, so to speak, and he was very familiar with its "high uneven places" and with the squires and justices of the peace who ruled there in the days of good Queen Bess. It has had its battle-fields, its sieges and fortunes in profusion, and out of them it ought to be able to construct a remarkably fine pageant.

MYSTERIES.

Because the morn
Holds yet a magic in its shining air,
A breath divine of luminous dreams that fare
Beyond earth's bourne;
Because the night
With haunted darkness climbs reluctant skies,
Nor shows to any of the earthly wise
Her secret flight;
Because the woods
Change with the changing of the restless wind
And no man knows the hidden force behind
Their variant moods;
Because man's love
Stirs in secluded chambers of the soul
And no man holds the reins of its control
Nor sees it move;
Because all life
Throbs to the rhythm of a tune unknown
Sounding with tears and laughter in its tone
And peace and strife;
Because the ban
Of mystery lies upon us all our days,
A ceaseless song of passionate hope we raise
To thee, O Pan.
O let us be
One with the large perfection of the whole,
Suffer the weary and wayfaring soul
To rest in thee.

ROBIN FLOWER.

How it may be in other countries, we cannot say, but it is to be feared that the Briton has lost a good deal of any faith he ever had in the practical results to be achieved by International Congresses. He must, however, be a person of peculiarly weak faith and strong pessimism if he can doubt that somehow good will come of the International Conference on the Sleeping Sickness. Its object is before everything else practical, and a proposal for general action on the part of all the countries concerned in this very serious matter is to be submitted to the Conference, which will include delegates of Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal and the Congo Free States. Thus it will be fully representative, and it is stated that on the occasion and for the purposes of this particular Conference each delegate will be entrusted with full powers to sign agreements on behalf of his country. The chief discussion will range

round a draft act which Great Britain has drawn up and submitted to the countries interested, and Germany is said to have prepared another act containing some modifications in detail not very important.

One would not at a casual glance be apt to conclude that the growing of tobacco in Scotland is at all likely to prove a profitable undertaking; but, nevertheless, the Bill making it legal has passed through Committee by means of a vote in which the Government were defeated by a majority of thirteen against eight. It will, no doubt, be news to many that tobacco-growing in Scotland was carried on in 1782, after which it was prohibited in the interest of our Virginian Colonists. That it had attained some commercial success appears to be evident from the fact that those engaged in the trade received compensation. The battle in Committee was to some extent over a matter of form. The Government has been in the habit of invariably granting permission to those who applied; but some of the more fiery spirits thought that, as tobacco-growing has been legalised in Ireland by Act of Parliament, it ought to stand in the same position in Scotland. There is very little reason for believing, however, that the small cultivators will take it up to such an extent as to necessitate the organisation of a new revenue department.

Among the men from whom we expect an interesting autobiography one day is Mr. Thomas Hardy. The preface which he has just written to the Year Book of the Society of Dorset Men in London gives a fine glimpse of what must have been an exceptionally interesting youth. He tells us that he plunged into the life of London forty-five years ago, and hints at disconsolate strolls up and down Holborn Hill before the Viaduct was constructed, and wanderings in the labyrinth of Seven Dials before the new avenues were cut; while for amusement he would go to see Phelps or Charles Kean in Shakespearian tragedy. Speaking from his experience he does not think that a man in that position cares very much about other young men just arrived from the same district; but with that fine insight into human nature for which he is distinguished, he adds "those who are pre-eminently grateful do not live in London at all. I refer to the mothers of the younger constituents of this body." And he goes on to refer to the sleepless nights and anxious days that have been spent not only by Dorset mothers, but by those of every other county, at the time of their youthful sons' first plunge into the city alone.

Mr. Hardy is far from considering such fears unjustified. On the contrary, he says that mothers are never able to realise the actual risks that youths run in London. No doubt he is right. There is no solitude like that of a great town, and there is no irresponsibility equal to that of a youth who has lost in it all the checks there had previously been on his behaviour: the approval of his elders, the respect of his friends, the love of those dearest to him are bourne from which he has temporarily escaped. It has been said that a man proves himself either an angel or a beast as soon as his travels have carried him beyond the bounds of civilisation in Africa or Asia, and something of the same kind might be said of the youth left to himself in a great city. Those, of course, who have courage and good principle will stand upright without support, and those who are vicious will generally go to the bad under any circumstances. But there are many whose characters are not yet formed who are much the better for knowing when they begin the battle of life that they will have many of their county friends around them, and that is only one aspect of the good done by the various county societies such as that of Dorset.

The national drinking bill which Dr. Dawson Burns annually brings before the public is not such a very dreadful affair after all. On paper, if we take the totals, the figures may appear to be at first glance appalling, as the teetotallers say, but they are not so much so when we look into them. There is a slight increase in those for 1907 over what was spent in 1906, but when the increase of population is allowed for it is found that we are spending less per head. It is only a little less, to be sure—sixpence. That is, we spent £3 15s. 9d. per head in 1907, against £3 16s. 3d. per head in 1906. The great increase is in the consumption of spirits. It would appear that beer-drinking is on the wane, and the growth of wine consumption is very small indeed. The Scotchman still seems to stick to his whisky and the Englishman to his beer, but less ardently than before.

The "Daylight Saving Bill" which Mr. Pearce is said to have drafted for submission to the House of Commons, is one which ought certainly to have the support of those who love a country life. In the artificial life of the town daylight seems of less relative importance. This Bill has for its purpose to effect the object which many autumn residents in the Highlands attain

by setting on all the clocks in the house an hour and a-half. This can only be done without inconvenience in a self-centred small community which does not need to adjust its times to those of others. The effect of the proposed Bill, if passed, would be to put on the clocks, during the summer, of the whole nation, to make "British time" in the summer an hour and twenty minutes earlier. The manner in which it is proposed to achieve this is by reckoning the hour between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. on each of four Sundays in April as being of forty minutes only; that is to say, practically, that on each Monday's waking all clocks shall be advanced twenty minutes. There would then be no upsetting of railway time-tables or any other time arrangements, and the nation would gain an hour and twenty minutes of daylight, and save its light bill accordingly all through the summer. For winter, the time is brought back to what is now normal by giving eighty minutes to the hour between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. on each of four Sundays in September. It is a proposal which sounds at first fantastic. The exercise of a very little imagination shows it to be supremely practical.

At the moment of going to press much anxiety is being felt about the condition of the Prime Minister. His illness has proved longer and more serious than was at first anticipated. According to an old proverb we only begin to know our best friends in the day of adversity, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman has at least the gratification of having found out through his illness the respect in which he is held by everybody in England, quite independently of their political opinions. His tenacity of purpose, accompanied as it always has been with tact and a sense of humour, is a quality that appeals to a race with whom dogged determination has always been one of the highest virtues. King Edward set a new precedent when he paid the Premier a visit of condolence before going abroad; but in this, as in so many other respects, he accurately interpreted the feeling of the British public.

LONGING FOR THE NORTH.

Oh! I may walk in Southern ways
By the lovely river-land,
And watch the soft wind as it plays
With the corn on either hand;
By honeysuckle and wild rose lane,
And flowery, fairy dells,
But my heart goes out with a kind of pain
For a sight of the Northern Fells.

Oh! I may live where the Western sky
Lifts over the open moor,
And watch the great ships steaming by
Through the stately harbour door;
But soft is the air of moor and sea
Breathing of slumber spells,
And wild, wild, wild is the heart of me
For the cold of the Northern Fells.

Oh! to stand where the great hills close
Round the tarn at even-fall,
While the brown, brown bracken grows to a rose
And the wild-fowl wheel and call!
And through the gloom and the glamouring
You can hear the light sheep-bells,
Ah! never the South and the West for me
With my heart on the Northern Fells.

DOROTHY FRANCES GURNEY.

Mr. Walter Rye is one of our most learned antiquarians, and the paper in which he seeks to support the arguments that Chaucer must have been a Norfolk man, literally teems with curious out-of-the-way information. King's Lynn even at this moment is one of the most interesting places in East Anglia, and contains many buildings, or remnants of them, that help us to reconstruct the life of the past. In Chaucer's day it was a great wine port and, like our modern John Ruskin, Chaucer's father was known to be in the wine trade. From a careful search in the Lynn records, Mr. Rye has gleaned much circumstantial evidence of the connection between the town and the family of the poet. Chaucer's wife was the daughter of Sir Henry Picard, who was King's Butler at Lynn in 1350. His grandfather, Robert Chaucer, was also called De Gunthorpe—from a village not far from Bawdeswell to which Chaucer made reference, showing that he knew well the local topography. Absolute proof that Chaucer was born in Norfolk is not at present forthcoming, but those who are interested in the subject will find a great deal of curious evidence gathered together in Mr. Rye's contribution to the *Athenæum*. The county which produced Sir Thomas Browne has already established a claim to celebrity; but no doubt natives would be gratified to learn that it, too, gave us "the well of English undefiled."

To whatever cause it is to be ascribed, the fact is certain that there has never been a year when the gardener at this early

season has been so badly pestered by insects of various kinds, and by slugs more particularly. Many of the most promising young plants are being eaten right off, and we have been very dismayed to find the fine Crown Imperial lilies, which were coming on splendidly, attacked by some evil pest—probably a slug—boring through the outer leaves right to the centre of the plant's life. Recent rains have, no doubt, encouraged the activity of the slugs, and the only really effective way of checking it is by human activity—nocturnal for choice, when the lantern will reveal myriads of the rascals at their ill-deeds.

There is one question, at least, which seems as if it was never likely to receive any satisfactory solution, and this is the large and sorely-vexed question about the rights and the wrongs of trawling and other modes of fishing round the

Scottish Coast. Part of the trouble is, of course, that it is so much easier to enforce a close time or a close area against our own fishermen than against those who come in foreign boats; but the question is immensely complicated and further obscured by a lack of very definite knowledge as to the true interests of the fish which it is sought to protect. The latest incident in regard to the whole affair is a meeting of the Aberdeen Trawl Fishermen's Society, at which a resolution was adopted, it is said unanimously (a very big word indeed in connection with any meeting in Aberdeen), to protest against the Sea Fisheries (Scotland) Regulation Bill. As a mere act of protest it may not carry immense weight, though there are people whom the Bill touches closely; but it is at least an indication that all cannot be regarded as in the course of amicable settlement. The Bill, if passed, will not, it appears, make everybody happy.

THE BOOK OF LINDISFARNE.

By SIR EDWARD SULLIVAN, BART.

AT a distance of about three miles from the eastern sea-coast of Northumberland lies a hilly tract of land which to-day is known as Holy Island, but which in earlier times was called Lindisfarne. So shallow is the sea which divides it from the coast that the Venerable Bede has described it as at times an island and at times a portion of the adjoining mainland, a description which Scott has emphasised when writing of it.

For with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;
Twice every day the waves efface
Of staves and sandals' feet the trace.

To this sequestered spot Aidan, a monk of the Irish colonists of Iona, came in A.D. 634, as a missionary from the Scottish Church. Being appointed a bishop by the Northumbrian King Oswald, who had then lately embraced Christianity, Aidan selected Lindisfarne as the site of his episcopal See, and the first rudely-built church there was erected under his auspices. Before long, a company of monks established themselves in its immediate neighbourhood under the rules of St. Columba, and grew, in time, into the renowned Priory of Lindisfarne. Aidan, during his tenure of the See, and as Abbot of Lindisfarne, set up a number of monastic houses in the Northumbrian kingdom; and his own abbey became one of the chief centres of Northern Europe for the production of beautifully-illuminated MSS. of the Celtic type. Other Irish monks succeeded Aidan as bishops, including the famous St. Cuthbert, whose miraculous acts were so many and so marvellous as to lead an old writer to say of them, "The monks of Lindisfarne deflowered all the miracles of the saints in Holy Writ, and bestowed them upon St. Cuthbert." After St. Cuthbert's death, his body was enclosed in a stone coffin in accordance

with directions said to have been given in his will. Tradition also tells that he had enjoined the monks to carry his remains away with them in case they should ever be compelled to leave their island home. Within two years of his death, Eadbert became bishop, and removed the thatched roof of the primitive Christian church, replacing it with a leaden one. He died in A.D. 698, and was succeeded by Eadfrith (or Egfrith), who had previously been a monk at Lindisfarne in St. Cuthbert's day. It is to Bishop Eadfrith, one of the most learned men of his time, that the world of art is indebted for the Latin translation of the Gospels contained in the magnificent manuscript which is known as the "Book of the Gospels of St. Cuthbert," or the "Book of Lindisfarne." It was written some years after St. Cuthbert's death in A.D. 688, and not, as was long believed, during his lifetime. The volume is at present, as one

writer describes it, "the glory of the Cottonian Library" in the British Museum, and it may be regarded as the sister of the sumptuous "Book of Kells," now in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, to which, in the general character and beauty of its ornamentation, it bears a very strong resemblance. For 100 years or so after the production of this now famous book, the monks of Lindisfarne continued to enjoy a secluded life in their remote home, unmolested by enemies on the mainland and ignorant of any dangers from overseas. A widely-spread success had attended their missionary efforts, churches springing up all through Northumbria, and the many beautifully-illuminated manuscripts which they produced bore eloquent testimony to the rare standard of art which they had pressed in these early days into the service of their faith. This ideal existence, however, was not destined to last, and in the ninth century the quiet of their monastic seclusion began to be disturbed by the Northern pirates who from time to time descended on the English shores. The Abbey was plundered more than once, and many of the defenceless monks



THE COVER.

were slain; and at last, in fear of utter extirpation, the surviving remnant of them determined, in A.D. 878, to abandon the island and seek for some more tranquil place of settlement on the East Coast of Ireland. These made their way across country to the Irish Sea, carrying with them the body of their patron saint (or, as some say, the shrine which contained his relics), and also the magnificent volume of the Gospels which up till then had been saved from the clutches of the marauding Norsemen by being concealed in St. Cuthbert's grave. Having reached the West Coast, they took ship for Ireland; but the frail vessel in which they sailed was driven back by a furious tempest, during the raging of which their treasured manuscript was washed overboard. When they regained the English shore, the holy volume, to their great amazement, was already there before them, lying in safety on dry land in the box in which they had packed it, the illuminations, according to the chronicle of Symeon Dunelmensis, being quite uninjured by the sea-water. For more than a century after this the successors of the exiled monks wandered to and fro through the land before they found a final resting-place for St. Cuthbert's remains in the Minster which they founded at Durham. The Book of the Gospels was then laid on the coffin of the saint, and there it remained till early in the twelfth century. It was then removed, at the time when St. Cuthbert's body was exhumed, and, shortly after, it was sent back to Lindisfarne, where a monastery of the Benedictine Order



ST. MATTHEW.

had been established by some monks of Durham on the spot once occupied by St. Cuthbert's ancient Abbey. Here it was safely housed until the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII., when its original gold cover was torn from its sides and melted down. The manuscript itself was fortunately unharmed, and was afterwards, early in the seventeenth century, bought from Robert Bowyer, then Clerk of the Parliaments, by Sir Robert Cotton, from whose possession it passed, together with many other volumes that belonged to that noted collector, to the British Museum.

The book, as it is to-day, is a volume 13½ in. in height by 9½ in. in width, consisting of 258 leaves of the finest vellum. Its British Museum description is: "The Four Gospels, in Latin, with St. Jerome's Epistle to Damasus, the Eusebian Canons etc." The present binding, the design of which was suggested by one of the full-page illuminations of the volume itself, was the gift of a Bishop of Durham. It is of crimson velvet, on the upper cover of which is superimposed a broad silver frame, the panels of which are adorned with Celtic strapwork interlacings, studded with stones of various colours. The cruciform centre-piece and the other decorative panels within the frame are also of silver, but let into, or sunk in, the velvet. The title is embroidered lengthways on the back. The under-cover is surrounded by a narrow silver rim, ornamented at the corners with chased silver squares, each carrying a coloured stone, the centre being occupied



ST. MARK.

by a disc of silver, appropriately chased, about 1½ in. in diameter. At the end of the manuscript is a note of singular interest, written apparently in the tenth century, which, according to Mr. Warner's translation, runs as follows:

Eadfrith, bishop of the church of Lindisfarne, he at the first wrote this book for God and for St. Cuthbert and for all the saints in common that are in the island. And Ethilwald, bishop of those of Lindesfarne island, bound and covered (?) it outwardly as well as he could. And Billfrith the anchorite he wrought as a smith the ornaments that are on the outside and adorned it with gold and with gems, also with silver overgilded, a treasure without deceit. And Aldred, an unworthy and most miserable priest, with God's help and St. Cuthbert's, overglossed it in English.

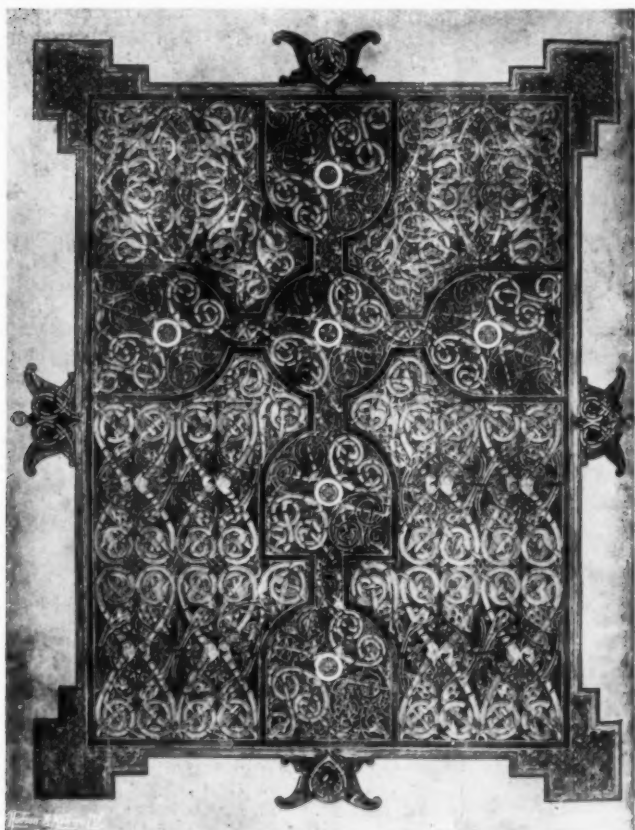
Mr. Warner's interpretation of the words used of Ethilwald and Eadfrith is, that the latter was the artist as well as the scribe. This would, however, seem to be inconsistent with some linguistic



ST. JOHN.

errors referred to later on, as Eadfrith had the name of being a very accurate scholar. It would, perhaps, on the whole be safer to conjecture that the figures of the Evangelists, or, at least, the (sometimes) inaccurate legends with which they are accompanied, may have been the work of a subsequent illuminator. The text, which is beautifully written in black ink of wonderful depth, is in double columns of twenty-four lines, finely formed of semi-uncial characters, the larger initials being highly ornamented and the smaller ones filled in with colour.

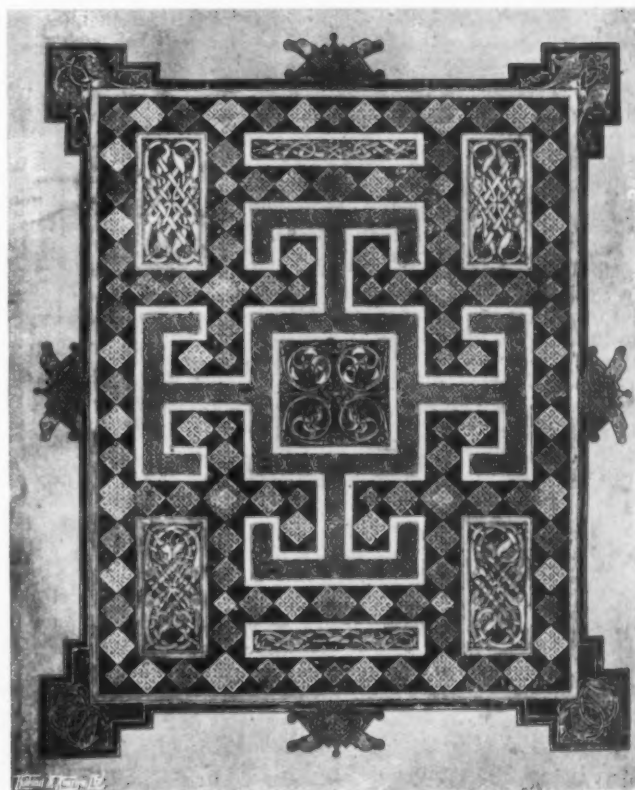
The figures of the Evangelists, as they are depicted in this superb volume, form one of its most striking features. They are of a style, for the time, more or less unique, being as unlike, in their artistic details, the contemporary Irish miniatures as they differ from the paintings to be found in the most notable of the Carolingian manuscripts. The bold character in which they are conceived marks them as things apart from the Byzantine and Italian figure paintings of their day; yet, in spite of the seeming crudeness of their rough conventionality, their execution is of the highest technical kind. Traces of Byzantine influences may, nevertheless, be observed in the fashion of the garments, with their peculiar plaits in unnatural and regularly-disposed lines, as also in the form of the seats. Professor Westwood notices "the green shading over the eyes and along the sides of the nose as peculiar, after the Byzantine manner." According to Mr. J. B. Waring "these figures probably exhibit the highest state



FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATION.

which pictorial art, founded on late and debased Roman models, had attained in England about the middle of the eighth century. We meet in this volume with a conjunction of Eastern and Western arts curiously combined, each distinct in character, and both destined in a very short time to give place to the Anglo-Saxon school, in which both were blended, interspersed and finally merged, forming another distinct style."

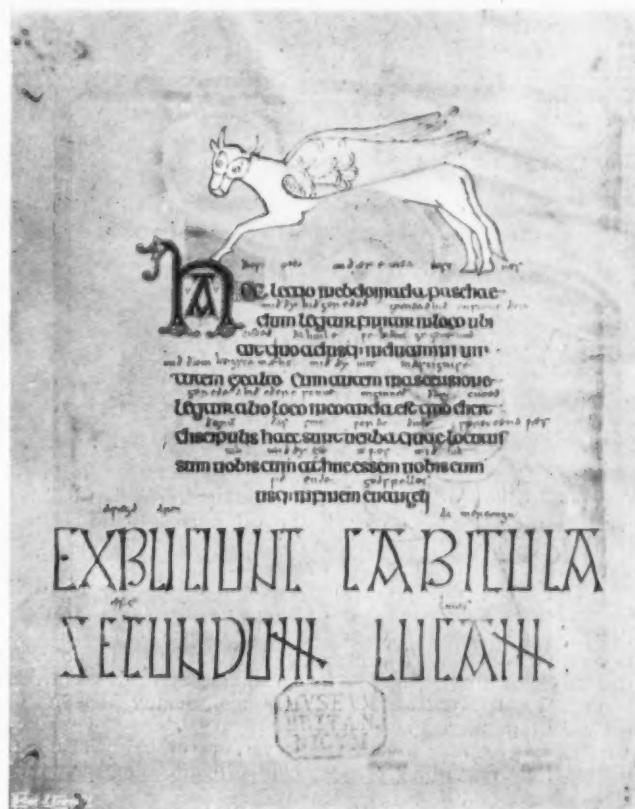
The illustrations shown here of some of the pages of this highly-illuminated *textus* give but a faint notion of its peculiar beauty, which depends as much on colour as on design. There is a mellowed atmosphere of rich harmony resting on all the full-page illuminations, which only breaks into more vivid tones of colour in the painted figures of the Evangelists; but even the latter are without the gold which is so lavishly made use of in later manuscripts. The figure of St. Matthew, for instance, wears an under garment of dark purple, with orange edging at the neck, the wrists and the bottom of the skirt. The outer garment is a pale green, the quaint lines indicating the folds being in red. The Saint is seated on a red cushion. The figure above the nimbus is the symbolical angel, but blowing an Anglo-Saxon trumpet. Of the form appearing from behind the curtain (which is red) Professor Westwood says, "After much consideration I am inclined to believe that this figure (of which no similar instance has hitherto been published in any of the many representations of the Evangelists) is intended for the Holy Ghost



FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATION.

dictating the Gospel to the Evangelist." The hair of this figure and that of the Saint are of a greyish blue tinge. The letters in angulated Anglo-Saxon capitals read, "O AGIOS MATTHEUS" — an inaccurate Greek form for "St. Matthew." In the representation of St. Mark the inscription, "O AGIUS MARCUS," is remarkable as being a Latinised form of Greek — possibly the result of a defective knowledge in the writer of the latter language. The picture of St. John bears the legend "O AGIOS IOHANNES," which is again a curious mixture of Greek and Latin, while the second word of the minor inscription ("aequilae") is misspelt.

Another remarkable characteristic of the Lindisfarne Gospels is the series of five entire pages covered with most elaborate and intricate designs, and generally arranged so as to show a



LAST PAGE OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

cruciform pattern in the middle of the page, two examples of which are illustrated on the previous page. One of such decorated pages is opposite the commencement of each Gospel; and, in allusion to this fact, Mr. Westwood suggests that the object of these striking illuminations was "that when the volume was placed upright and open on the altar, facing the people, a grand display of colour and design should be visible, naturally inducing an idea of reverence to the sacred text."

The decorative features of this remarkable volume make it, as Professor Middleton says, "a characteristic example of the Irish school of illumination, modified by transplantation to English soil. The intermediate stage in Iona and other monasteries of Western Scotland seems to have introduced no change of style into the primitive Irish method of ornament. Whether produced in Eastern Ireland or in Western Scotland the manuscripts were the work of the same Celtic race. . . . When, however, the Irish monks passed from Iona to Northumbria the case was different; they were surrounded with a new set of artistic influences mainly owing to the introduction into Northumbria of fine Byzantine and Italian manuscripts. The result of this was that though the Lindisfarne manuscripts continued to be

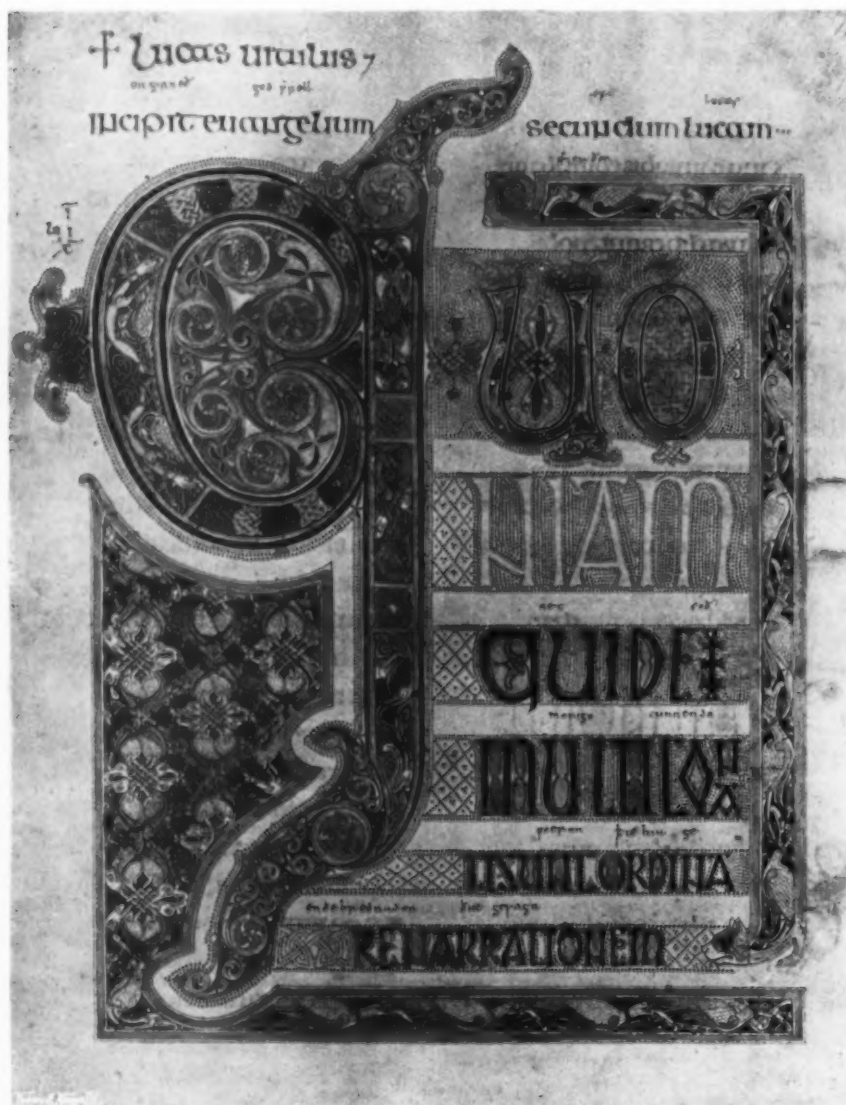
own islands, and I now venture to assert that no monument or art relic of a date previous to the ninth century can be produced in which these, and especially the spiral pattern, are introduced, the execution of which cannot be satisfactorily shown to have been dependent on the teaching of our missionaries.

Several hundred years after this style of decoration had passed out of general use in the illumination of manuscripts, it was adopted in a modified form by the bookbinders of Italy and France on the introduction of gold tooling on leather; and some of the most beautiful designs identified with the great names of Maioli, Grolier and the Lyonesse school of bookbinding in the sixteenth century are undoubtedly indebted to artistic suggestions derived from these exquisite Celtic creations.

THE ISLE OF AXHOLME.

MARCH of this year has not been favourable for beginning a course of spring expeditions, and the first Friday in it was one of pouring rain and blustering wind, the worst conditions conceivable for seeing little homesteads to advantage. Yet having penetrated as far as Doncaster on the frosty evening of a particularly fine day, it behoved one to go on regardless of weather. My ultimate destination was the village of Epworth; but Mr. Standring, the Chairman of the Board of Guardians, at whose invitation the journey was made, had arranged to meet me at Haxey, and this was where the train was left. The short journey supplied food for reflection. Doncaster is chiefly a meeting-place of railway lines, being to them what the now stagnant and decaying village of Bawtreay used to be for the stage-coaches, but four new light lines are either constructed or in process of construction. They typify the change now being accomplished in rural England. I thought more of this on returning than in going, for in the interval I had, among other things, a talk with one of the oldest Epworthians, Mr. Taylor, a gentleman who, in his eightieth year, retains in a memory as clear as daylight the impressions of an unusually observant mind. He told me how remote and secluded Axholme, with its centre Epworth, was in his youth. This he showed by a very curious illustration. In his childhood flax and hemp were the crops most frequently grown, and, to use his graphic phrase, every cottage had a wheel in it, for in those days it was very literally true that, in this Lincolnshire Eden, "Adam delved and Evé span." To continue, the roads were, in winter, impassable for carts, and, if this had not been so, carts would not have been allowed to go along them. At convenient points the cottagers made crossings by putting down the rough dressings of hemp, and would have been angered if a wheeled vehicle had disturbed these homely footpaths. Epworth, then, like many another little town, lay "enised" and self-supporting. The small holders of that day had perforce to sell their produce and buy their goods in its streets. Even now the district lies far away from the main lines of traffic, but the building of numerous light railways is so opening up the country that no single spot can long remain private or unvisited. When potato-growing and celery culture were having their day, the producers of Epworth, like the fruit-growers of March and Wisbech, were able to seek a market in Scotland.

To return to our impressions. It is a peculiar landscape that is unrolled as the train steams closer to this Isle of Axholme, flat as marsh or fen, yet differing from both. Gleaming grassland and dark arable, bordered by white straight lines of artificial water, all lying so low that it can be flooded from the Trent. Water is the clue to the making of the fields. The process is called warping. Its object is to coat the original soil with alluvial deposits from a river. Originally, that is to say, in times almost prehistoric, the land would appear to have been forest. Its staple is peat, embedded in which are the roots and trunks of trees occasionally turned up to this day in deep ploughing. It forms an ideal subsoil for the "warp." It would be telling an oft-told tale to record here the history of Axholme. In the British Museum there is a considerable library on the subject, and some fifteen years ago or so an elaborate report was drawn up by the Government, embedded in a Blue Book and laid on the shelf. The modern interest dates from the Enclosure Acts. Open-field cultivation had gone on



FIRST PAGE OF ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL.

decorated with exactly the same class of patterns that had been used in the "Book of Kells" and other Irish manuscripts for initials, borders and the like, yet in the treatment of the human figure a very distinct advance was made."

The really prominent characteristic of these early Celtic illuminations is the wonderfully graceful interlacing strapwork design, which is so deftly used to fill in the vacant spaces in the decorative scheme. The origin of this pattern is by no means free from controversy, some suggesting that it was borrowed from ancient Mycenæ, and others maintaining that it was derived from more or less contemporary Byzantine sources. Professor Westwood's views, however, are probably nearer the truth. Referring to his prolonged investigations of Roman and Byzantine MSS., he says:

My search, however, was in vain; and I returned home more than ever convinced that the peculiar styles of our earliest works were elaborated in our

from time immemorial, and the strips or sections in the open fields are still owned separately, and are open to the eye as you approach Epworth. But well towards the end of the century there were great commons or wastes of the manor where in early times the villeins of the house of Mowbray had grazing and other rights, which later on were enjoyed by certain copyholders, tenants and freeholders. Among those who possessed rights of common the land was divided *pro rata* when the Enclosure Acts were passed about 1790. The lord of the manor received his share, and so did the tithe-owner, which explains why so much of the land is tithe-free. Thus did these holdings come into existence. They range in size from a quarter of an acre to farms of 200 acres. Unfortunately, the ladder is not complete. Several rungs are missing just at the point where living from the land becomes a possibility; in other words, there are not enough one-horse farms, holdings of from twenty-five to fifty acres. A vast number of the sections and plots are no more than allotment holdings; that is to say, bits of land held by tradesmen and labourers, not as a means of livelihood, but as a supplement to incomes derived from labour or shopkeeping. Nothing struck me more than the freedom with which land is "circulated." One might gather this from the record of sales published from time to time in the excellent local news-sheet which rejoices in so pretty a name as the *Epworth Bells*. Most of it comes to the hammer in patches of under one acre, and the prices range from £30 an acre to close on £120 for bits of extraordinary fertility. I had the opportunity of looking over the record of a year's sales, and from a casual glance they appear to number hundreds. They show activity, but no abnormal demand, since in many cases a bargain is not effected because what is usually a very reasonable reserve price has not been reached. On the other hand, there are no signs of the land being consolidated into large holdings. An exceptionally-industrious man who has had a "bit of luck" thrown in may during his lifetime acquire a score of small holdings or more, but at his death they are either divided among his heirs or (which is more frequent) are put up to auction and sold separately. Obviously a great landowner has no temptation to purchase a section in a common field, and he would not care much to possess the tiny closes—so like the miniature fields of Scilly—where the other holdings are. So the number of small holders remains fairly constant. Yet the population dwindles. The manufacturing centres adjacent to the Isle of Axholme are ever beckoning to the young men, and seldom without an affirmative answer. One result of this is seen in the schools. Another fact illustrates the same point. The population of Epworth is at the present moment about 1,820, and of this total no fewer than 140 are over seventy years of age; that is to say, one person in every thirteen has passed the Psalmist's limit of three-score and ten. Such a result points in a degree to the exodus of the younger generation, but it also shows how healthy is the little low-lying village, and how conducive to length of days is the calling of a small holder. It means the open-air life of the labouring man, with an added zest and buoyancy due to the knowledge that he who toils on his own land will ultimately obtain the fruit of his labour. Yet the frequency of land sales indicates that existence here is not devoid of anxiety. Lack of reserve and lack of capital are the weakness of these men. There were times during the long depression when ruin hovered over every little holding and homestead. To-day, however, an air of prosperity hangs over the place. Mr. Taylor told me how he remembered Epworth as a congeries of small cottages roofed with thatch. Families had a tendency to run large in those days, yet each was crowded into a house of two living-rooms scarce large enough to hold them. But the young and old, adult males and females, had to pig together somehow. His description reminded me of the evils against which Denison Maurice and Charles Kingsley protested so emphatically and which Bishop Fraser tried to remedy. That was a time when the average villager could neither read nor write, but had to sign with his mark, and when the labourer, squeezed out of his overcrowded dwelling, found solace in the drink and riot of the public-house.

How the depression that began in 1879 was ultimately surmounted might form a chapter in itself. Some day perhaps a qualified writer will give us a true history of the rise and progress of the potato fever. The "potato king" has a house in Haxey, and the wondrous tale is recorded with glee of his famous tuber aptly named *Eldorado* sold at £150 per lb. What his profits were may be judged from the fact that it had been previously offered at a sovereign. And how carefully the tubers were nursed and tended! The practice was to put the potato in a hot-bed till it sprouted, remove the sprouts and wait till more came. Under the influence of heat and manure more did come till the root was exhausted; but that did not occur till rows of sprouts had been secured. On two points one would like to hear a thoroughly qualified opinion. *Imprimis*, Was the constitution of the potato weakened and made tender by the hot-house treatment? The way in which it disappointed expectation would seem to point to

something of the kind. *Secundum*, those who sell potatoes for seed usually recommend that moderately-sized tubers should be planted whole; but does not the fact that single sprouts transplanted to well-manured soil give a full amount of produce tell in favour of the practice of cutting into sets each of which may be as small as you like provided it has the essential "eye"? Whatever may be the answers to these queries—and they have no special reference to Axholme—the abnormal features of potato-growing have passed away. It continues to be a sound industry upon a natural basis. The root worth its weight in gold is an exploded superstition.

Celery also yielded splendid results for a time. It is a gross feeding plant, and experience shows it practically impossible to give it too much manure. One farmer laid it on at the rate of thirty-three tons an acre, and produced excellent results. The after-effects were also satisfactory. For its culture the method employed was to dig a deep trench 4ft. wide, heaping the earth up on either side, and the celery was grown on a thick bed of manure. It was obtained in immense quantities, which found a ready sale in the Midland and Scotch markets. The benefit of the heavy manuring lasted through several seasons, and was increased by the fact that the earth thrown up out of the trenches was thoroughly exposed to wind and sun. A wheat crop could not be taken the next year, because it was found that the exceeding richness of the soil produced a large growth at first, but caused the plants to rot subsequently. Potatoes did well on the land, however, and after they had been followed by beet or another root, the manure was sufficiently exhausted to permit of a return to white crops.

In conclusion, a word should be said about the danger of drawing any wide and general inference from the prosperity of these Lincolnshire small holdings. As a district the Isle of Axholme is absolutely unique, and it would not be possible to copy elsewhere the conditions that prevail in it. Even this Eden, as has been shown, has its serpent, who is the money-lender. The opinion of those who have local experience is that the men would do better if they hired the properties instead of buying them, retaining their capital for outlay upon the land from which the best return can be obtained. When an individual has strained his resources to effect a purchase he has nothing to fall back upon in the case of ill-luck or a run of bad seasons. Yet even when that has been said it remains a great pleasure to see a population so prosperous, active and healthy. A.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

OLD books on husbandry are not as a rule very attractive to the general reader. They are much more so to various classes of students. In them the historian finds material for painting the condition of the people, the economist searches them for indications of price and value, to the antiquarian they are valuable because they afford authentic glimpses of the past. But as literature they cannot be estimated very highly. It is true that occasionally we get a Varro or a Virgil who unites knowledge of rustic life with love of a fine period; but as a rule the English exponent of agriculture is too intent on giving directions to weave his knowledge into literature. In spite of that, both instruction and entertainment are to be had from Mr. Donald McDonald's *Agricultural Writers* (Horace Cox). He has confined himself to a period lying between 1200 and 1800; in other words, he begins with Walter de Henley and ends with Arthur Young, who died in 1820 at the ripe old age of four-score. Seldom have we to complain of an author for being too brief and compressed; but this book would certainly have been improved had the author given himself a wider and freer scope. But an attentive examination of the famous "Hosebonderie" would show almost exhaustively the conditions of English agriculture in the thirteenth century, the style of farming and manuring, the kinds of livestock kept, the habits of the men who attended them, the dress, food and holidays of labourers, their tendency even then to linger in the ale-house, and a thousand other small particulars. Having, as it were, started English farming under the eye of Walter de Henley and Robert Grosseteste, it would by the light which other writers afford have been most useful to watch its development under later advisers. Again, to say in less than a dozen lines that Sir Thomas Littleton "was the author of a very studious book on Tenures" is not enough. It was necessary for the clear understanding of what comes after to give some idea of the tenures of land in those early days. In fact, a brief sketch of the cultivation of a feudal manor would not have been out of place, as it would have illuminated much that must otherwise be obscure to the reader who is not an expert. Other country pursuits, such as gardening, fishing and hunting, have called forth literary enthusiasm, so that some things that have been written upon them form an essential part of classical English literature. It is true that farming in its various phases has often caught the eye and fired the imagination

of poetic writers; but those who have dealt with it in earnest have seldom attained to that beauty of style which is the first essential in literature. Thomas Tusser put his 500 points of good husbandry into rhyme; but his purpose was in all probability mnemonic rather than literary, although once or twice, as in the famous line, "'Tis merry in hall, where beards wag all," he deviates, as it were, into exquisite expression. But farming has not inspired anything comparable to, let us say for example, Izaak Walton's "Complete Angler," or Lord Bacon's Essay on "Gardening." Probably Mr. Donald McDonald, who is a scholarly and well-informed writer, understood all this perfectly, but was too modest to launch out into the much greater book that would have been required for the style and treatment at which we hint. Even as it stands the volume is deserving of a place in the library of the country house. It is evidently the work of a collector as well as of a student of agriculture, and is illustrated with reproductions of frontispieces, title-pages, folios and other characteristic portions of the works dealt with. The first writer to receive longer attention is John Fitzherbert, whose approximate date is from 1460-1531. In his case the author adopts the plan that we have suggested for the earlier writers. Nothing could be much more interesting than the passage which he quotes, showing that well-nigh four centuries ago different kinds of ploughs were used in England:

Somme goo with wheles, as they do in many other places, and some wyl turce the sheldrede at every lands end, and plowe all one way.

Another interesting point is Fitzherbert's remark as to barley:

That there be three maner of barleys, that is to say, sprot barley, longe eare, and bere barley, that somme men call bigge. Sprot barley hath a flat eare, three-quarters of an inch brode, and three inches long. Long eare is halfe an inch brode, and foure inches and more of length.

On which Mr. McDonald makes the very pertinent remark that the modern type of flat-eared barley known as Goldthorpe, and the long-eared type which we call Chevalier, were in some form or other known to Fitzherbert. Another passage well deserving of quotation is that devoted to weeds:

There be divers maner of wedes, as thistles, kedlokes, dockes, cocke, drake, darnelde, gouldes and dog fenell. The thistle is an yll wede, and there be other wedes, as dee nettylles, dolder, and suche other that doo moche harme.

The following list, too, of articles which may by chance be left behind at an inn, and, therefore, may be described as necessities for a gentleman during travel, is extremely interesting. They were put in this form so that the gentleman's servant might run them over till he had them by heart:

Parse, dagger, cloke, nyghtcap, kerchief, shoying horn, boget, and shoes. Spere, mole, kede, halter, sadeclothe, spores, hatte, with thy horse combe. Bowe, arrows, sword, bakler, home, leishie, gloves, string, and thy bracer. Penne, paper, inke, parchemente, reedwaxe, pommies, bokes, thou remember. Penknyte, combe, thymble, nettle, threde, poynte, lest that thy gurtie breake. Bodkyn, knyfe, lyngel, give thy horse meate, se he be showed well. Make mery, syngie an thou can, take hede to thy gere, that thou lose none.

Fitzherbert's book on surveying also marked a new departure. Thomas Tusser, who comes next, is more difficult to epitomise; and, besides, he has received so much attention that there is little new to be said about him. Syr Richard Benese, 1500-46, carried on "the maner of measuryng of all maner of lande." John Norden, 1548-1625, resumed the subject of measuring land. Sir Richard Weston, 1591-1652, was a man to whom agriculture owed very much. He was practical as well as theoretical, and his name is associated with the navigation of the Wey and the introduction of the "grass called nonsuch," really a clover now known as trefoil. Samuel Hartlib, 1600-62, was described by Evelyn as a "master of innumerable curiosities and very communicative." He was the editor of Sir Richard Weston's works, and seems to have been a man of varied and extensive knowledge. Gabriel Plattes, 1600-55, brought some interesting lessons from France to England, and dealt especially with the enclosure of land; so that very properly Mr. McDonald makes the introduction of his name the text for a little essay on enclosure. We next come to that celebrated writer Gervase Markham, who sprang from a place near Newark in Nottinghamshire. He was a voluminous writer, who has been studied very carefully in recent years. Adolphus or Adam Speed, 1600-60, was the author of "Adam out of Eden; or, An abstract of divers excellent Experiments touching the advancement of Husbandry." Sir Cornelius Vermuiden is associated with the draining of the great fens. Mr. McDonald gives him but scant notice, yet his work is very interesting, and there are many

examples in it to which reference might have been made. The draining of the marsh ought to have formed a very interesting chapter in what is practically a history of English literature. In the work of Andrew Yarranton, 1620-85, we find this about turnips, which is very interesting:

Sheep fatten very well on turnips, which prove an excellent nourishment for them in hard winters when fodder is scarce; for they will not only eat the greens, but feed on the roots in the ground, and scoop them hollow, even to the very skin.

John Houghton, 1640-1705, wrote a collection of letters that contain much valuable information upon the husbandry of his time. In his time began the field cultivation of the potato, which he calls "a bacciferous herb with esculent roots":

This, I have been informed, was brought first out of Virginia by Sir Walter Raleigh; and he stopping in Ireland, some were planted there, where it thrived very well, and to good purpose; for in their succeeding wars, when all the corn above ground was destroyed, this supported them; for the soldiers, unless they had dug up all the ground where they grew, and almost sifted it, could not extirpate them. They are a pleasant food, boiled or roasted and eaten with butter and sugar.

So we pass on through a multitude of more or less interesting books to Sir Roger L'estrage, and from him to Jethro Tull and Arthur Young, with whose works those who have any learning on the subject are familiar.

FINDING A BIRD'S NEST.

MR. PETER BADGERY, who for several years rented the shooting on Hamperdown Hill, was not exactly a countryman, although he could not rightly be called a Cockney in any sense of the word. He came of an old-fashioned, true blue, rural stock; and there is a deal in blood, as we all know. But he was born and



S. Whiting.

NOT SO PUGNACIOUS AS HE LOOKS.

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passed his schooldays in a manufacturing town, whence he paid holiday visits to bucolic relatives and breathed a whiff or so of unadulterated country air. Thus quite early in life, on a frosty Christmas morning, he encompassed the death of a wild duck by taking a walk at daybreak up the miller's brook. He went to rook-shooting parties, and, scorning perchers, brought down flyers in fine style. He was not altogether unacquainted with the ways of the rabbit, its disposition to go abroad in the cool of a dewy summer evening and its incomprehensible refusal to bolt on a mild December day. He had also waited among the autumn sheaves, or at sunset in the dark pine spinney, for wood-pigeons to drop in. And then, suddenly, he was snatched from these delights to be planted "out in life" in a Tooley Street office devoted to hides. Under these circumstances Peter Badgery struck root and flourished like a pelargonium cutting in a flower-pot. He blossomed into general manager, and very soon expanded into full flower as a junior partner. He married the miller's daughter, and they lived in West Hampstead in a detached villa, with a lawn the size of a hearthrug on each side of a tessellated pavement leading from the gate to the front door, and an almond tree spreading into the road over the privet hedge and the pallsade. Nothing could be more idyllic, and Peter and Mrs. Badgery were as happy as a pair of thrushes. What with the business, the house and, in due course, the little ones, there was nothing on earth to wish for. Of an evening they read the Nature article in their daily paper. They picked up plovers' eggs, gathered nuts and went a-mushrooming all in season; and, in fact, enjoyed in imagination all those perennial rural delights which never grow stale. Then they dreamed, if things should continue to go well, of some day purchasing an estate—not a large one—with an old house, not too expensive to keep up, and a bit of wood, so as just to have a pheasant or two, and a brook to give the chance of another wild duck. Peter said he should keep one farm in hand and manage it himself. He said it would be the joy of his declining years to watch lambs grow up into ewes, and to breed a colt or two. Mrs. Badgery would sometimes reply that colts are mischievous creatures and often end in disappointment. But Peter contended that Nature was willing to do the whole trick. Nothing could be more simple. No business worries. Purchase a really good mare—and there you were.

Things went so well that, towards middle age, Peter, feeling, as he put it, the want of exercise, and that he really must unbend the bow, determined to take a shoot. He said it would be such a capital thing for the boys. A rough shoot with plenty of walking after wild birds was his mark. Not a slaughter of poor handed creatures that had to be hunted into flight like barn-door fowls. Peter Badgery felt very indignant about that sort of thing, and almost swore that he would never countenance it, though he should live to be a hundred. No. He would have his shoot just as Nature intended, with a keeper to look after poachers and keep down vermin. And there must be a nice cottage, which the keeper's wife, a homely, clean, respectable woman, could look after and keep well aired when they were not there. Peter Badgery found a place just to his mind when he took Hamperdown Hill. To be sure, at first there was no great head of game on the shoot; but then, as the keeper explained, it had been so neglected. Why, the very hedges stank of rats and stoats, and the sky, in a manner of speaking, was really black with crows and great blue hawks. "Only wait a bit," said he, "and then if you should but catch sight of

so much as a jay or a magpie, why, you show 'un to me then, that's all."

But, after all, as Peter Badgery reflected when speaking of the very moderate dimensions of his bag, the mere shooting is not the chief advantage to be derived from renting a shoot. No, no! The week-end in spring is the thing. With all the birds mating, nesting and singing, it brings a man in touch with Nature. Just think of the anemones and the primroses, and then the bluebells, like a lake of water in the wood. Picture the cowslips dotted all over the meadow. Peter would return really eloquent of a Monday evening and boast to his friends of all the birds' nests that he had found. As a matter of fact,

Peter had never discovered a nest except in the company of the keeper's urchin; but it was scarcely worth while to mention that. "Come down with me, old chap. Take a run down with me next Saturday and I will show you round," he would cry to one after another, in the exuberance begotten of fresh air and brought back from the open fields. One after another went down. Peter very soon built up the reputation of being a first-rate naturalist upon the reports of the wonders that he had to show. Everybody said it was a marvel how he could find so many nests. It only showed that your really fine man of business was in reality a many-sided man. Peter drank in this appreciation greedily and felt refreshed. Yet in moments of secret self-examination it troubled him to reflect that he had never discovered one single nest.

"Badgery," cried his partner one morning, "they tell me you are a perfect genius at bird-nesting. I never saw a nest in my life except a pigeon's in Kensington Gardens and a sparrow's in the spout. I'll run down next week and take a walk round with you. They say you are a regular squire down at your place there, and more at home in the country than if you'd been a yokel all your life."

Peter was delighted. He modestly set aside the

compliment, but admitted that he had already learnt a thing or two.

They ran down by the Saturday afternoon express, and had time for a pleasant walk on a beautiful May evening. Knowing that he had to deal with a real Londoner, Peter was more than usually instructive. His mind became exceptionally clear, and, as he warmed to his subject, all the learning acquired from numberless Nature articles he had at control. He led the way through an orchard and pointed out the chaffinches' nest on the limb of an apple tree. He showed how cunningly the lichen had been selected, so that it matched and was scarcely to be distinguished from the mosses on the branch. And what a pattern of neatness! They stood with legs apart in knickerbocker suits of Donegal tweed and puffed the fragrance of Havannah while they meditated upon this. Presently they went on to a thorn bush. "That's a long-tailed tit's," whispered Peter. "There in the shape of a soda-water bottle. Hush! She's sitting. That's her long tail sticking out of the hole." Then the partner stooped to gaze with reverence at the tit's tail. So they went on, looking in upon the linnets in the clump of sweet-smelling gorse, and stopping to pay a hurried call upon the blackbirds behind the plashing of the hedgerow bank. Thus they wandered on into the wood and down the ride through the coppice.

"Badgery!" said the partner with emotion. "You surprise me. I confess it, you surprise me. I have always known you to be a smart fellow. In my opinion, and I do not hesitate to express it, you are the finest judge of a hide in Tooley Street—"

Peter, staring up into a bush, uttered an ejaculation of delight,



S. Whiting.

STONECHAT.

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"You are, Badgery. But I never dreamt this of you. There is nothing—absolutely nothing to do with country life that you do not know—"

Peter could contain himself no longer. Alone, unaided, all by himself, he had found his first nest. "Look here!" he interrupted, pointing to a hazel bough. "There is a nest—a new nest; I mean one that I have not found before."

And sure enough there it was, a thrush's nest of fresh green moss, but placed with the utmost candour on the most open situation afforded by the bush. They gazed at it a while in silent admiration.

"Now that bird, if I may put it in this way," said Badgery's partner, in a diffident tone, "does not appear to me to have chosen so eligible a site—from the point of view of privacy, I mean—"

"Oh, well, they may vary a little when—when sheltered by a wood," explained Peter.

"But it looks to be out of level, as if it had been stuck up there."

"That's the wind; but it must be all right," cried Peter, raising himself on tip-toe, "because it has eggs, quite a lot of eggs. I'll just take them out to show you. One should always be very gentle in dealing with a nest; birds are so apt to forsake it. Great Scot! What the devil! There's a stoat or a rat or a squirrel got hold of my hand! I can't pull it out! It's a badger—it must be, for they bite hard and eat eggs. Oh, the deuce! It's got my finger through to the bone, with teeth like an alligator. Oh! pull it down; oh!"

Someone came pushing a way through the bushes. It was Peter Badgery's keeper, and he ran up for all he was worth.

"Massy 'pon us! Why, here's master have a-catched his hand in the gin I set up for a jay. I'm blessed! That ever anybeddy should ha' thought that wings and feathers could build in a place like that!"

WALTER RAYMOND.

A FIASCO.

FOR six weeks H—and I had wandered through the forests and grassy plains of Assam in pursuit of buffalo, which twenty years ago abounded there, but now are rapidly becoming extinct. We had gone full of hopes, after reading the books describing the sport there years ago. We were now in desperation, and had given up all hope, for during all the time of our wanderings we had not seen a single bull. Everywhere we went it was the same story; over every salt-lick or drinking-place we found machans in every tree, where every moon the native shikaris sat and shot at young and old, male and female alike. We had now four days left of our leave, and opinions were divided as to whether we should give up an apparently hopeless quest or pay a visit to a place some ten miles off, of which we had just got news, and where buffalo were said still to exist. We had received the same news so often before, and on going to the place had found lovely feeding-grounds, plenty of water; in fact, ideal places for buffalo, but not so much as even an old track of the beasts we sought. Hope, however, springs eternal in the hunter's breast, and the next morning saw us, our kit and servants on the backs of our elephants, cutting a way through the jungle in the broiling hot-weather sun, on this forlorn hope. Towards evening we arrived, hot and tired, at a large open space in the middle of the forest. This bheel, as these spaces are called, was covered with lovely short green grass, growing in an inch or so of water, a perfect feeding place for buffalo or bison. We pushed



S. Whiting.

A BLACKBIRD'S WATCHFULNESS.

Copyright.

out into the middle to look for tracks. A bear had passed across the corner during the night, and a little further on a number of lanes through the grass showed where a herd of wild elephants had been feeding that morning. These, however, did not interest us, and we moved on. A little beyond were some more tracks crossing the grass. The leading mahout leaned over as he came to them, stopped his elephant and leaned lower, then turned and called out "Bhosh!" (buffalo). A minute before we had felt as if nothing on earth would induce us to go a step further that day; but now all our fatigue was gone, and, leaving the baggage elephants behind, we pushed on along the tracks. They went for some distance in the grass to a place where the bheel narrowed into a neck, with dense jungle on either bank, beyond which we could see that it expanded again into a larger bheel, with a large pool in the middle of it. Here the tracks turned off into the tree jungle. We knew it was no good starting so late to follow buffalo into tree jungle, as their midday siesta would be over, and they would be beginning to move again towards their feeding-grounds. So we went back and pitched camp

in the jungle on the far side, hoping that our quarry would come out to feed in the evening.

About four o'clock we mounted the elephants again, and went through the neck of the bheel into the one beyond. Here we again picked up the track of the herd and decided to follow it, as there appeared to be a line of these bheels connected by narrow necks, and the buffs seemed to have gone along them. For half-an-hour we followed them, passing through several bheels, and in one place crossing a narrow strip of jungle into a bheel beyond. That there was a good bull among them we could see from the great size of one of the tracks whenever they crossed a soft bit of open ground. In one place the tracks of the herd went to the left, while those of the big bull turned to the right. H— was following the herd, while I was trying to puzzle out the bull's tracks on a bit of hard ground, when my mahout suddenly turned his elephant to the left, and began driving it on as fast as he could. I looked round, and could see the other three elephants halted on the edge of what looked like another bheel. The mahouts were lying flat on the necks of their elephants, while the last one was beckoning to me furiously. We rushed up, and the last mahout whispered that the buffalo were in the bheel. I slipped off my elephant without waiting for it to kneel down, and ran forward to join H—, who had already dismounted and gone towards the bheel. The elephants were standing in grass some 15 ft. high, so I knew that they could not be seen by anything in the bheel. I soon caught up H—, and we went on to the edge of the grass together. When we got there the sight that met our eyes nearly took my breath away. The bheel was circular, some 60 yds. in diameter, covered with short green grass a few inches high, and there was a large pool of water in the middle. In this bheel were nine buffalo, some standing, some lying down on the grass, while three were lying in the water with only their heads and backs visible. They were absolutely unconscious of our presence and were quietly chewing the cud or grazing. The occasional flap of a tail was the only motion in the picture. My heart beat wildly. Our many weeks of blazing sun and hard marching were going to have their reward.

It was H—'s first shot, and he knelt down to shoot at the old bull, who was lying down half facing us some 40 yds. away. He was a fine picture as he lay there calmly resting, his huge size and massive, far-spreading horns marking him out from the

rest of the herd. I decided to take a very large cow that was standing near him, and waited for H— to fire. A movement to the left caught my eye and, turning, I saw that the animals in the water were suspicious and had stood up and were looking towards us. I whispered to H— to be quick and got ready to fire myself. H— was using a double eight-bore, while I had a double .450 cordite and another similar gun in the hands of my gun-bearer behind me. After an apparently endless wait H— fired. I saw the whole herd spring to their feet and start off. I raised my rifle to fire, when the smoke from H—'s black powder came drifting across and I could see nothing. I did not realise in the excitement of the moment that it was smoke, and a second later the smoke lifted slightly and I fired at what I took to be the cow I had marked before. I could not see clearly, but the bullet apparently caught her right, for she came down on her knees, recovered herself and went on, stumbling at every step. Before I could fire again the smoke drifted between, and when I next saw the buffalo I fired so hurriedly that I missed clean. I snatched my second gun from the bearer; but as I raised it H—, in order to get clear of the smoke, took a step in my direction, and knocked some stems of elephant grass on to my barrels. I tore them off, but in my rage and haste I again missed clean, the bullet knocking up a fountain of dust just over my beast. They were all climbing the bank into the long grass when I fired my last shot. The thud told of a hit, but I was not at all sure that I had not changed beasts in the confusion of the rush up the bank. H— fired his second barrel just as they disappeared, and missed.

We mounted our elephants and went after them. Opinions differed among the shikaris as to whether H— had hit the bull or not. I had seen the beast get up before the smoke reached me, and thought he had missed. When we reached the grass on the opposite bank there were two blood trails to be seen, so I followed one and H— the other. The grass here was only

6ft. or 7ft. high, but was very thick. We had gone some 50yds. or so on the track, when the mahout on the other elephant with me signalled that he saw something; so beckoning to H— to come, I went up to investigate. Suddenly from right under the elephant there was a rush, and a buffalo went away at full speed. I fired both barrels at it, and it stopped about 50yds. away. I had seen enough to know that I had got confused over my last shot, and that my bullet had struck a small one.

H— had come up now, and we followed the buffalo. I could see the grass moving a short distance ahead, so tried a couple of shots by guesswork, which apparently did not hit it. I then went up nearer, but could not see to shoot, as the grass was too thick. When we got to about 5yds. from where the movement was, there was a savage snort and out came the beast full tilt at H—'s elephant. All the elephants turned to run immediately, but I managed to put in a shot at about 2yds. I wished in an instant that I had not done so, for my elephant had started to gallop, and just for a second I felt that I was going to fall off in front of those terrible horns that kept tossing first one way and then the other as the buffalo came charging along a foot or two behind my elephant. I grabbed wildly with both hands and, luckily, caught the girth-ropes—we were all on pads only, and had no howdahs. The buffalo chased the elephants for 100yds. and then turned and went back. After some difficulty we got our elephants to go up to it again, and I got a nice shot at it standing and dropped it. It was a small cow; I am ashamed to give the measurements. Very angry, we turned and followed the other blood trail. It joined the rest of the herd and they all went off together. We followed till dark through jungle and bheel, but the blood track got fainter and fainter and finally died out, and at last we gave it up and went home. We lost our way in the dark, and when we had reached camp and gone to bed a thunder-storm came on, which wetted us through, as we had no tents.

WANDRINGGUN.

THE FORBEARS OF RICHARD JEFFERIES.

SO much misconception hangs round the youth and early manhood of Richard Jefferies, so many incorrect statements have been made thereon, that it is felt by those in the closer circle of blood relationship that it is time the mistakes should be cleared away at once and for aye. In nearly all—if not quite all—the notices that have appeared of Richard Jefferies, much stress has been laid on the fact of his poverty. It is true that a superfluity of this world's goods was not the portion of this particular family; but the home was a comfortable one, a freehold farm, and until later years, when Richard was able to fend for himself, there was a sufficiency for all needs. Too little appreciation of the author's father and forbears generally has been given. It was through his father and grandfather that the literary aptitude can be traced. Both sides of the house, in fact, were noted for their mental activity, as I hope to show.

In the year 1738 was born at Draycott Folliott, Wilts. Richard Jefferies, who in 1772 married Fanny Luckett at Lechlade, Gloucestershire. Their early married life was passed at Rodbourne Cheney, Wilts. The house is still standing where James Luckett and John were born; the only other child, a daughter Fanny (who died unmarried) was born at Lechlade. The father appears to have been a man of force of character, while his wife, from traditions carefully preserved in the family, must have been a woman not only of parts, but of means and refinement, her many journeys to Bath being noted at a time when only the wealthy and high-born frequented that "city of waters." She died in 1805, while her husband survived her twenty years. He increased his possessions by purchase of land in Swindon and the neighbourhood,



RICHARD JEFFERIES.

(As a young man.)

Then there is another shorter note, dated November 23rd, 1815, in which the Rev. Mr. Tudway "begs Mr. Jefferies to inform him whether he is satisfied with the new value of composition as paid by his agent Mr. Brown, and if so, to pay the first half-year's instalment to him on Monday next, between the hours of 11 and 1 o'clock."



COATE FARM.

(After an old sketch. The figures are supposed to be Dick and Harry.)

acquiring the chief milling and baking business in the town—then a simple market town, possessing no historical or architectural features—and ultimately coming to reside there. Situated on the top of a high hill, and intensely healthy, it was the cradle of a particularly hardy race. The records relating to this Richard Jefferies that have been preserved show that he was a shrewd man of business. He objected to pay more than he thought justifiable to the Rev. C. Tudway, vicar of Chiseldon, Wilts, in the matter of tithes and tenths. I have before me a letter from the latter gentleman, dated March 19th, 1805, time-stained, but in a beautifully clear handwriting, wherein he says:

Not having heard from you respecting your Tythes I beg to know in writing by the bearer whether you are inclined to pay me Mr. Brown's valuation of your composition for Tythes due on Monday next, £6 16 6. If not I must be under the necessity of requiring you to bring your Tenth measure of milk entire without fraud or diminution to the church porch at Chiseldon according to the Ecclesiastical Law.

In July of the same year there is a formal notice served on the contumacious Richard, which evidently had not much effect, for under date April 8th, 1817, there is a bill of costs headed "A Modus Question in Chancery," too long to quote *in extenso* from Mr. Crowdy of Highworth, in which it is stated that Mr. Jefferies' portion of the bill of costs, which came to £52 10s., was £8 15s., "being 1 part in 6 of the above expense." The only known scrap of writing

attributed to this stalwart yeoman, Richard Jefferies, written clearly and firmly when eighty-two years of age, I must quote verbatim:

I, Richard, Jefferies, am willing to pay Mr. Tudway the accustomed sum which I before have paid, 14/6 yearly, 11th May, 1820.

And overleaf:

Composition for Tythes due to the vicar of Chiseldon valued in June, 1815 at £5 16 6 per ann: by Mr. Brown, and agreed to by all the Farmers at that time. Five years' composition up to Lady Day, 1820. £29 2 6.

Evidently his son, John Jefferies, inherited the firm and obstinate character of his father, for there is a further note from a Mr. Bullock, the then vicar of Chiseldon, *re* the same troublesome "tythe." This vicar seems to have been of a milder disposition than Mr. Tudway, "being unwilling to go to law with my parish," for on January 25th, 1832, the Rev. J. T. Bullock tries to make a compromise and says:

I will meet you halfway and consent to receive £3 8 3 yearly. I shall be glad to hear your determination as soon as possible, because in the event of your refusing my offer, which I beg to state is without any detriment to my claim of £6 16 6, I shall be necessitated to proceed at once to obtain my just rights.

Again Mr. Jefferies is requested to send him the sum of "£3 6 0 due as four years' tithe on Tuesday, the 14th, 1833." Under it in my grandfather's writing appears:

J. Jefferies' composition 4 years at 14/6 a year: £2 18 0

The poor vicar had to accept that sum; for his receipt dated May 24th, 1833, reads:

Received of Mr. Jefferies the sum of £2 18 0 for tithes under a supposed Modus for two years.

THOMAS BULLOCK

I have quoted thus lengthily to show how strong are the chains of heredity, the determined nature of the great-grandfather being reproduced in his son John, again in James Luckett Jefferies his grandson, and not a whit the less in his great-grandson, John Richard Jefferies, the author. Richard Jefferies' eldest son, James Luckett, was possessed of eccentric habits, and subject to violent fits of temper, yet was not without recurrent phases of repentance. Tradition has it that he was a terror to children and dressed in a style to cause remark if nothing else—boots unlaced, trousers hitched up in a way peculiar to the owner, and shaggy hair and beard. Still, there are one or two persons who remember him in their early youth as one, if not exactly to be loved, whose peculiarities have been too darkly limned by a recent writer. His sister Fanny, who died many years before his death, must have been even more of a care and anxiety to my grandfather and his wife, with whom they both lived and died. The youngest son John, born May 7th, 1784, inheriting the tastes of his mother and, undoubtedly, her intellect,

for, in the house, which was a large old-fashioned one, built round three sides of a square courtyard, lived the eldest son in his apartments and the elderly maiden aunt in hers. The naturally fresh and active young life of the children was checked by the presence of those who cared not for, and could not understand, the exuberance of youth.

When John Jefferies returned from London—and he engaged the whole inside of a coach for his family—he took up the burden of his uncongenial occupation manfully, but it was none the less ever distasteful to him. He was a man of strong will and marked individuality. He felt it, therefore, his duty to carry on a business he loathed for his children's sake, turned his back for ever on the great city, though he never ceased to love all things pertaining to books and literature. His father disliked banking his money, and hidden in various parts of the old, rambling house large sums were found. With these the son built two houses in Swindon—private residences then—now long since turned into shops. The farm, which figures so largely in the history of Richard Jefferies, the author, had been for some time in the possession of the family, and when the children of John and Fanny Jefferies were growing up there was never any lack of means. In fact, had my grandfather been a business man and seized the opportunity, when the Great Western Railway made Swindon their headquarters, to obtain some of the contracts offered to him, he might have become very rich. But he would have nothing to do with any "interloping train" (the new railway was a mile and a-half away from the town, down field-bordered lanes), and so the tide was not taken at the flood. He never entered a train in his life, or returned to London after leaving it in 1816. He was very greatly set against all railway men, holding off for a long time from the acceptance of one as his son-in-law; but, eventually, coming to regard that one as the prop and stay of the family. His line of action was peculiar, as he was a man of intelligence and parts, "a prodigy of learning" (as a lady still living remembers him), a great lover of the country and its sights and sounds. He was extremely fond of driving across the uplands near the town to see the waving, golden corn; and at an age of much over seventy would climb up two flights of stairs in a daughter's house to sit at an upper window and gaze his fill at the swelling undulations (now long since blocked from view by houses), which extended for miles across a fertile green valley to an answering chalk ridge. As a child I remember distinctly two large bookcases—how we sigh for them now, absolutely typical pieces of Chippendale as they were!—filled with books and MSS., which occasionally I was allowed to handle; but, alas! in 1868, owing to some family arrangement, not really understood until too late, all but some score of books, including the three-volume Family Bible, was scattered to the winds, a dealer coming from Bristol and purchasing the lot! Treasured possessions of the family are still

preserved among some of us in the shape of old china, ancient deeds, silver, furniture, etc., which have of late years greatly increased in value even to the possessors, as the craze for old things has grown. The books in my possession, to me, are priceless. They are, as in the case of Nelson's "Fasts and Feasts," annotated by my grandfather and contain notes on various past events of interest. It was grievous to have parted with the others. A relative suggested that Richard should have a portion at least of the library as the inheritor of his grandfather's literary tastes; but the proposition fell through, probably from the reason that the contents of the house were practically left to the daughter, who had married a Scotchman, with the proverbial hard head for a bargain. This same John Jefferies loved reading and reflection, and though endowed with the warm



THE ORIGINAL HOME OF THE JEFFERIES FAMILY.

(After an old sketch.)

early went to London and entered the firm of Mr. Taylor, printer and publisher, Red Lion Court, Fleet Street. Here he remained for some years, married, and with his wife and four children returned to Wiltshire in 1816, owing to the wish of his father, and the inaptitude of his brother to manage the business, which at that time was an excellent one. Four more children were born in Swindon, the first one being my own mother. John Jefferies and his wife must have had a particularly trying time,

temper of the family, was a man of singular generosity and kindness under the crust of reserve. When he disliked he did it thoroughly; but he was a conscientious upholder of Church and State, proud of his children's leaning towards things intellectual and literary. For many years prior to his death he distributed on his own birthday to each of his numerous grandchildren a sovereign apiece. He would give a house here, a meadow there, when he wished, to "even things

up" to his own children. His wife, "Fanny Ridger," a bright, handsome, amiable woman, to whom her children were devoted, died in 1858, while the summons did not come for him until April, 1868. The eldest boy, James Luckett (father of Richard, the author), born in 1816, felt the effects of the repression alluded to, never got on well with his father, and in 1837 left home for America. Hearing, through an outside friend of the family, that unless he came back, the farm—this very one of

the creeping poverty that eventually laid its hand on the homestead, resulting in the final break-up of the place, was the dreamy impractical mind of its owner; he hated the mart and the marketplace, shunned his fellow-men, if things went awry let them slide, content to live like one of his own farm hands, provided only God's earth was his to enjoy in his own way. Then, again, this man was, for his time and circumstance, an educated man. It is true he laughed and joked with the

cottagers, he spoke their language, and, apparently, thought their thoughts—and the villager then was of a lower type than is to be found now, even in rural Wiltshire—but this was a deliberate intention with him; he drowned thought and regret for wasted opportunity by living down to his neighbours. Those of us who know can look back, and are unable to tell on the fingers of one hand men in the same sphere of life as James Jefferies with a quarter of his innate refinement, knowledge, or education. The generality of farmers in that part were unlettered, ignorant, hard-drinking men; many of them made money—and this, I own, added to the bitterness of the Jefferies outlook of life—but there are letters still in the possession of the family, showing what this man, who has been classed in most people's minds as a mere rustic, really was. When Sir Walter Besant wrote his famous "Eulogy," time was



THE SUN INN BEFORE THE FIRE.

(After an old sketch.)

Coate—would go to an elder sister's husband, he returned and took possession of it. A cordial understanding was, unfortunately, never established between father and son; the former, perhaps, expected more deference and respect than he received, while the latter, inheriting also the family trait of obstinacy, and feeling sore at the constant coolness and disapproval of his actions, gradually drifted from the old home and scarcely ever visited his father. He married Elizabeth Gyde, daughter of a former colleague of his father's at Taylor's, a town-bred woman with a beautiful face and a pleasure-loving soul, kind and generous to a fault, but unsuited to a country life. Therefore, the grandfathers on both sides were of literary bent; one of Mr. Gyde's sons was a clever engraver on wood, and all of them were more or less gifted. James Luckett Jefferies had two brothers; one, the youngest, also named Richard, died young, aged ten; the other, John Luckett, passed away at thirty three. The latter—a youth of rare promise—developed into an artist of no mean powers; architecture, music and singing held great charms for him and he excelled in all. Many are the choice little pencil sketches, fine-line drawings and water-colours treasured by the family, together with his guitar and many volumes of music copied with a skilful pen. His sisters were all exceptionally educated women for the time, the eldest and fourth daughters being specially endued with a high order of intelligence and capability.

James Luckett Jefferies, the father of Richard, has been always placed on a line with the ordinary small tenant farmer, but this is a very grave error, as the possession of land in all time has been productive of very different sentiment to that arising from occupation by tenancy. That the original name of the hamlet was pronounced "Cote" may be taken for granted, as in an interesting bill dated June, 1805, "Mr. R. Jefferies is Dr. to B. Morland to the amount of £29 6 2 respecting the purchase of land at Cote." The farmhouse in which Richard Jefferies was born was the freehold of his father, presented to him on his marriage by his father, John Jefferies, and anyone who ever lived or even visited at the old home, would know how every individual inch of the ground, every sapling tree, every flowering shrub or nest-hiding hedgerow was loved and treasured by its owner. The elder man was handicapped from the start by insufficient working capital. The land was his—a little Naboth's vineyard, much coveted by surrounding landowners—but it was not large enough to run a big dairy on—the grass was too good for sheep—there was no corn land, and the days of poultry-farming were not. It was not large enough to keep a family upon without a balance at the bank for emergencies, and this James Jefferies never had, though he knew there was plenty of money lying idle in the paternal account, and he, the eldest, the only living son, could not touch it, nay, was grudging even a loan from it! Therefore, I wish it emphatically to be understood that James Luckett Jefferies was not born a poor man, though in manhood he was a heavily handicapped one. The real reason of

young for some of us, and the thought of putting down in printed words the refutation of such things as were hurtful or misleading had not borne fruit. This paper is written purely with the intention of rebutting the accusation that Richard Jefferies was an offshoot of poverty, and that his exceptional gifts were the more extraordinary on that account; and to give Richard's father his due as the one who trained his son to notice and admire the beauties of Nature. I do not think special notice has been taken of the sort of home this was before the wearing years of creeping want had taken the heart out of everything and everybody. Originally a thatched cottage, the larger portion of the dwelling-house had been added by John Jefferies; but the extravagant, one might say the refined, tastes of the son are shown by the improvements he gradually made. The long and handsome stone wall, topped by a wide coping, we all know about, was put up by Richard Jefferies' father. It was he who brought a water-finder with his witch-hazel to the farm, and who made the long tunnel through the fields to bring the water into the house (by the by, this water is gone from the old home now, and the cottagers used to say "ould Mr. Jaffries, he stopped it, afore he went away!"). It was he who rooted up all the rough, old cider apples, and stocked the orchard with the sweet, delightful codlins and russets it now possesses; he planted the pear trees on the walls, the Siberian crab and the yew tree on the lawn, and the luscious, and then little-known, egg plums; the box hedges, in Richard's youth just at their prime, taller than a man and a dense cover for birds. He scattered the musk seed, so that each year the delicate-scented little plant would crop up between the paving-stones under the "parlour" window. He built a ha-ha (wild extravagance! it is levelled now with the outer field) and a summer-house, round and thatched, coloured inside an egg-shell blue, and paved in exact, radiating lines with round, tide-washed pebbles (kidney-stones as he called them), for which he sent for miles a hired cart. His garden produce was always of the best; no one else ever grew such red carrots, yellow parsnips, juicy cucumbers! He planted horse-chestnuts and lilberts. (I remember how he cut down the whole hedge, in a rage, one day, because the men from the New Town, as it was called, had rifled the nuts in the early morning!) Then his gates! They must still be standing as a memento of his handiwork! No one has mentioned his gates except his son in his luridly untruthful, pathetically truthful, "Amaryllis at the Fair." Yet it is true, as he says there, that he spent days together on the manufacture of one gate. I can remember yet the smell of the freshly-sawn wood and the long talks that went on between master and man as they rested together on the sunny side of the hedge!

John Richard Jefferies, the author, was born November 6th, 1849, at Coate Farm, near Swindon. Very fond of reading and walking, Richard early developed a love for solitude, a trait

inherited from several ancestors on his father's side. As a boy and youth he had a wonderfully clear complexion, very fair hair, widely-opened prominent blue eyes, somewhat large mouth with slightly pendulous lower lip, well-shaped nose—on the whole a handsome lad, though spoiled by a tendency to stoop. Not particularly amiable, somewhat supercilious, not caring much, if at all, for outdoor games; fond of shutting himself up at the top of the house near the "cheese-room," where he spent much of his time in the production of blood-curdling romances. He invented, too, a sort of roller-skate, and many is the perilous journey about the "cheese-room" we made on these rudimentary articles. He was educated fitfully. Never very strong, as a boy he alternated between Coate and Sydenham,

the extremes of country and town life—one as free as air, the other dainty, elegant, closed in. He attended the only boys' school in Swindon more or less regularly. Times are changed, but I do not think he ever greatly distinguished himself as a pupil, neither was he popular with the boys. As I write this I distinctly remember him, then a boy of ten or twelve, reading to his grandfather in the "little parlour" of the old house in High Street, Swindon. He would call "goal" goal, and, though sharply pulled up, persisted in it, and eventually was ordered out of the room in disgrace. This early exhibition of contumacy makes one frame a parallel in one's own mind between himself and his autocratic namesake and progenitor, Richard Jefferies.

JEFFERIES LUCKETT.

IN THE GARDEN.

CARNATIONS AND PINKS—

SPRING PLANTING.

THIS may not seem the season to write of the Carnations and Pinks; but for those who have not what we may call a Carnation soil, March is the month to plant. The old tufts that have faced the troubles of several winters are the survivals of the fittest. It is the fresh layers, taken from the parent plants in early October, that it is in many cases wise to pot instead of placing them in the beds or borders, wherever they are to flower, direct. I have seen hundreds of plants fail through late autumn planting; the Carnations are unable to put forth sufficient fresh roots before frosts and cold rains make further progress impossible, and wholesale failures ensue. I should much like to hear the experience of Carnation-growers upon this point—whether autumn or spring planting is the most satisfactory, as far as personal observation and practice determine. In low-lying gardens with a heavy soil, March is the month to plant, otherwise planting in mid-September is safe, not later. A common fault is to leave this over until the following month, sometimes through the layers having been put down late in summer. Where the Carnations have been kept in cold frames during the winter they should now display great vigour of growth and be ready to plant out. Before doing so it is of the utmost importance to free the soil from every vestige of wire-worm. Fortunately in my ground this pest gives little trouble; but a few of these terrible plagues to the Carnation and Pink will play havoc, the flowers of the summer garden offering no choicer food. Although advocating March planting under certain conditions, it is far from my wish to suggest that any coddling treatment is desirable. From the first the plants must receive treatment likely to bring hardiness of growth, and during the winter, when they are in the cold frame, light and air are essential, air being given unless the weather is very severe and boisterous. A serious fault is that of keeping the soil too moist; this simply leads to decay. It is better to err in having too dry a soil than otherwise.

Prepare the beds at once for the Carnations, and they are never more beautiful than when grouped in separate colours. A mass of the pure white George Macquay is beautiful for many weeks, the large well-formed flowers supported on strong, sturdy stems. This is the type of border Carnation of which the raiser should strive to gain more—strength of bloom and of growth, with, of course, the true fragrance of



THE FIG-LEAVED HOLLYHOCK.

the flower. No soil is more appreciated by the plants than loam mixed with leaf-mould, a little well-rotted manure and some sharp silver sand. In my case, the soil not being suitable to Carnations, although my affection for the flower tempts me to overcome the obstacles one has to face, good farmyard manure is included freely to render the naturally hot ground cooler and better able to retain moisture. A few of the finest named varieties are: George Macquay; Ruby Castle, an old favourite, salmon rose in colour; Murillo, bright red; the Old Clove, Duchess of York, pink; Mephisto, crimson; Seagull, blush; Cantab, crimson, and deliciously sweet; Ketton Rose, which has been long in our gardens; Mrs. Frank Watts, white; and, if a yellow variety is desired—though this class is the least satisfactory of all—Miss Audrey Campbell.

At this time not only may Carnations be planted, but seed sowing may take place. It is astonishing what beautiful results come from sowing seeds from the best varieties. I have frequently gathered seedlings quite as beautiful as the named sorts, especially from the seed Mr. Douglas of Great Bookham, Surrey, sends out, and there is no greater authority on the Carnation in the world. Raising seedlings has a fascination apart from the usefulness and beauty of the flowers. It is a kind of flower lottery, and one lives in anticipation of some flower prize, something perhaps quite out of the ordinary, a departure from the existing forms which may bring honour to the raiser, although in the nature of a "fluke." Sow the seed as soon as possible after it is received, in pots and shallow pans filled with light soil, with plenty of crocks in the bottom to act as drainage. Just cover the seed with soil, and when the seedlings are large enough to handle, prick them off into boxes to give them space for expansion, and when they are about 5 in. high plant out into a reserve bed. When the flowers appear it can be seen which are the most worthy forms, and in this way a beautiful race may be worked up.

Much the same information given with regard to the Carnation applies also to the Pink, which is just as attractive to wire-worms as the Carnation. It enjoys the same soil and the same conditions generally, but is harder. Those varieties known as "laced" are of little garden value compared with the white varieties—the Mrs. Sinkins, Her Majesty, Albert and Snowflake; these make drifts of blossom in summer, and form a delightful edging to garden path or border, scenting the air with

their perfume in spring and giving beauty to the garden in winter through the silvery colour of their foliage. There is no more familiar flower than the Pink, and the old fringed sort, which gives to many a cottage garden its sweetest beauty, is loved more than the varieties that have been raised in recent years. C.

THE FIG-LEAVED HOLLYHOCK (*ALTHEA FICIFOLIA*).

THE single yellow Fig-leaved Hollyhock is certainly one of the most beautiful of its race. Many prefer the single forms to the monstrously-doubled florists' varieties now usually met with in gardens, which entirely lack the grace of contour exhibited by the blossoms still to be found in some cottage gardens, which have centres of curving petals not too closely doubled and clear guard petals. Of the singles, *Althea ficifolia* is to be preferred to any, its flowers, of exquisite shape, being of a delightful clear pale yellow colour, and the plant is well worthy of inclusion in the best herbaceous border. The blossoms are from 3 in. to 4 in. across, of delicate texture and very refined in appearance. The leaves are large, palmate and divided into from five to seven lobes, and somewhat resemble those of a Fig tree. From shortly after midsummer until the late autumn this Hollyhock creates a charming picture in the garden, its towering stems, 8 ft. and more in height, being studded with clear-coloured blossoms. Many aver that the Hollyhock should be treated as an annual, and that it is useless to retain old plants; but this particular specimen has now occupied its position for over five years, and annually throws up flower-stems that show no sign of decreasing vigour. It is also, apparently, not so susceptible to the dreaded Hollyhock disease as most of its family; for the plant in question has never shown the slightest symptom of it, though it must be said that no other Hollyhocks are grown in the same garden. Every year self-sown seedlings appear around the parent plant, numbers of which have been given away to those who did not possess the plant. *Althea ficifolia* is a native of Siberia, whence it was introduced into this country more than three hundred years ago. S. W. F.

FRAGRANT FLOWERS FOR THE GARDEN.

Sweet-scented flowers are always welcome in the garden, and there are many kinds that may be used. It is a very good idea to have at least one bed entirely devoted to fragrant flowers and foliage. The following are a few examples of this kind of bedding-out:

No. 1. Plant as a groundwork *Aloysia citriodora* (sweet-scented Verbena). The plants should be put out about 1 ft. apart; if they are small and bushy, a few inches further apart. Long and straggling branches should be pegged down, the idea being to cover the whole of the border so as to form a thick carpet. During the summer the shoots must be cut down to a certain level, about 6 in. above the surface of the bed. Shoots grow rapidly when once the plants are established and soon cover the soil. Put in as small plants, 2 ft. apart, *Heliotrope*, and fasten the branches to stakes so as to resemble plants grown in flower-pots. We have, for many years, planted beds in this way and they have always proved highly attractive.

No. 2. Three kinds of plants are used in this instance, namely, *Mignonette* and *Mathiola bicornis* (night-scented Stock), mixed, and *Nicotiana affinis* (Tobacco). The latter are put in as dot plants 2 ft. 6 in.

apart and the flower-stems are staked as they grow. The seeds of the *Mignonette* and the Stock should be sown thinly and evenly all over the surface of the bed and lightly covered with fine soil. When the seedlings are about 2 in. high the weakly ones must be thinned out to prevent overcrowding. The *Mignonette* flowers are always open, but the flowers of the other plants only expand in the evening and during cloudy weather. But such a combination of sweet-scented plants is truly delightful.

No. 3. *Mimulus moschatus* (Musk), planted as a groundwork, with Lilies as the chief plants, also forms a distinct feature. The following Lilies are suitable, namely: *Lilium auratum*, *L. speciosum album*, *L. speciosum album Krætzneri*, *L. speciosum rubrum* and *L. speciosum Melpomene*.

No. 4 may be planted with odd plants, young or old, or both, of the following: Sweet-scented Geraniums, Old Clove Carnations, sweet-scented Verbenas and Lilies. A few seeds of *Mignonette* should be scattered on the surface of the bed and lightly raked in, after the plants are put in. This is a good way of making use of old specimen plants in pots from the greenhouse. Of scented-leaved Geraniums the following varieties are suitable: *Citriodorum*, citron scented; *denticulatum*, finely-divided perfumed leaves; fragrans, nutmeg scented; *Lady Plymouth*, rose scented with variegated leaves; *Prince of Orange*, orange scented; *Pretty Polly*, almond scented; *Shrubland Pet*, filbert scented; *tomentosum*, peppermint scented; and *capitatum*, rose scented. Of course, the largest plants should be put near the centre of the bed, but not overcrowded there, but there should be no attempt at formal planting. Both flowers and sprays of foliage may be gathered from such a bed of plants throughout the summer months, and in the autumn there will be an abundance of cuttings, and the old plants may be lifted and repotted for future use.

PATHS OF HEATH TURF.

When pleasure grounds are on peaty soil where Heaths grow naturally, very pretty and pleasant paths may be made of Heath turf. The ground must be dug over and all stones, Bracken and other roots removed. It should then be carefully levelled and trod firm, hollow places filled and rammed, finished with a wooden rake, then rolled and left to itself. By the second year it will be covered with a close growth of Heath seedlings; those of *Calluna* should predominate. By the autumn of the third year the mowing machine may be passed over it; after that mow once a year, in October. It forms a close, springy turf, feeling to the foot like a Brussels carpet. In August, when the *Calluna* is in bloom, the effect is surprisingly beautiful.

CORRESPONDENCE

A QUICK-GROWING CLIMBER WANTED.

SIR,—Could you tell me what would be the quickest-growing climber I could get, evergreen preferred? I want it to run up one branch of a Beech tree. Two branches are left, but the third leaned over the house and was dangerous, so the top had to be cut and the stem of it looks so bare and ugly. I hope some climber will grow up it quickly to hide the ugliness.—R.

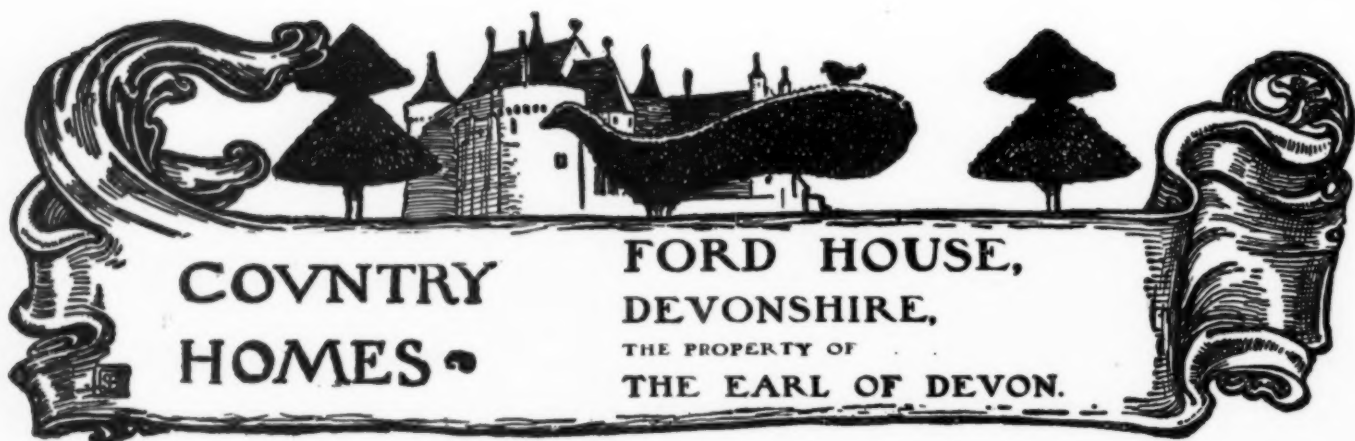
[Without knowing the locality or the height of the tree, we can only suggest that the Common Hop, Common Bryony, Mountain Clematis (*C. montana*), and *Polygonum baldschuanicum* are all quick-growing climbers. If the soil is of a heavy or clayey nature *Rosa wichuriana* would do well, and this has the advantage of being almost evergreen.—ED.]



J. M. Whitehead.

THE SLEEPING EARTH.

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THE Manor of Wolborough in Devon was, in 1545, bought of the King for the sum of £592 14s. 2d., by John Gaverocke, who had been its steward when, before the Dissolution, it had belonged to the neighbouring Abbey of Tor. Soon after James I. came to the throne, the co-heirs of John Gaverocke parted with it to Sir Richard Reynell, knight, of the Middle Temple. It was a case of a successful lawyer coming to spend his old age and his acquired fortune in housing and establishing himself as a country squire close to the home of his childhood. The Reynells, though an old Somerset family who early moved to Cambridgeshire, had acquired, by marriage, the Devonshire manors of Ogwell and Malston ere the fourteenth century closed, and at Ogwell had been seated ever since. Of them a Richard Reynell, marrying a daughter of his neighbour, John Southcote of Indhio, near Bovey Tracey, begot five sons, of whom four, "being virtuously disposed and serviceable in some good degree or other to the King's Majesty and their country," became knights, the eldest receiving the sword stroke at the Coronation of James I. The second was Richard, the lawyer, and when he bought the Wolborough Manor he set to work to copy the example of his

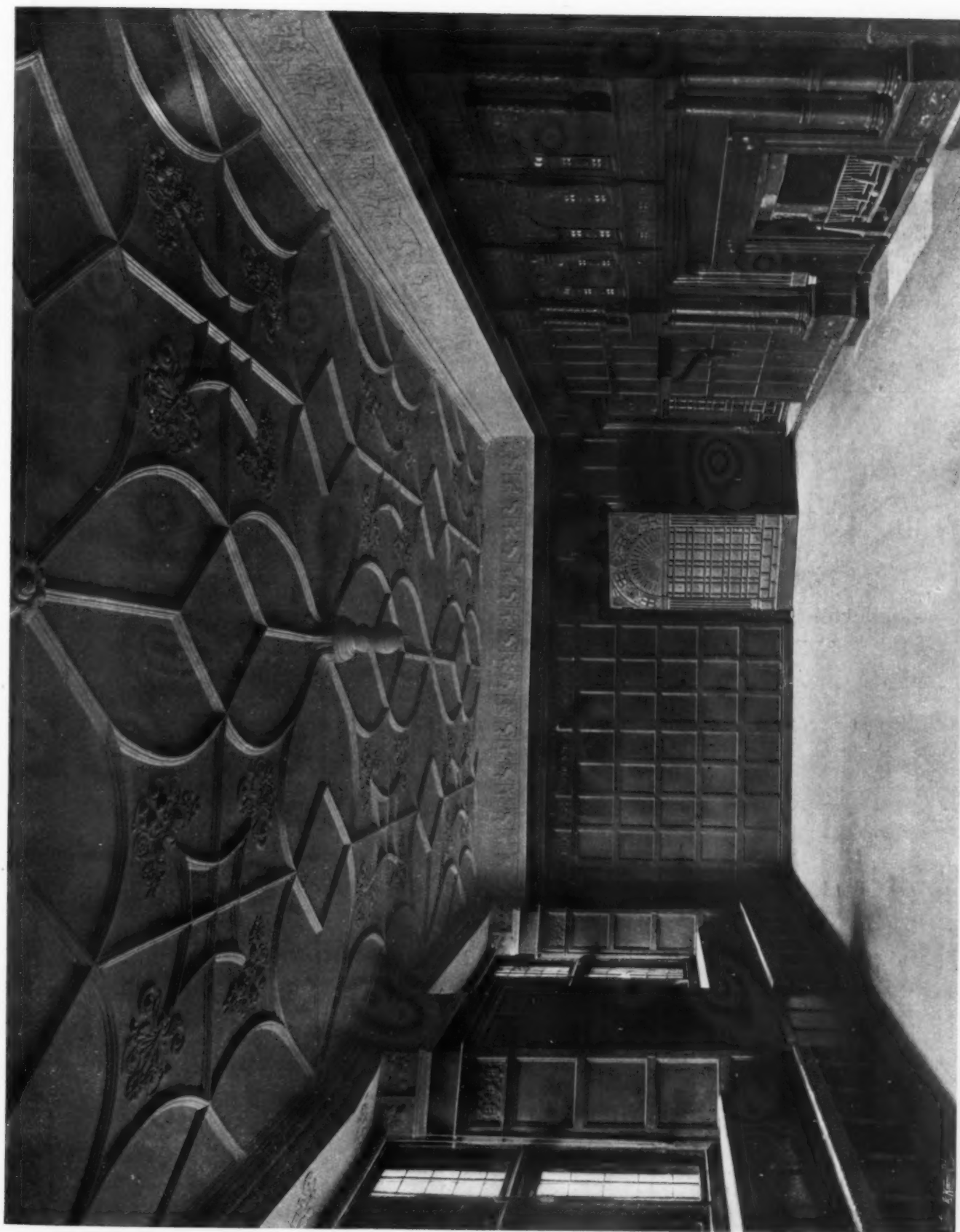
brother Sir Thomas, who, in 1589, had built at Ogwell the house which, much altered and added to, still survives. Sir Richard's house of Ford, built a score of years later, though somewhat fallen from its early importance and finish, retains to a much larger extent its original features. Wolborough was an extensive parish, whose mill hamlet, in the valley where Loman Brook meets Teign River, tended to become populous in the thirteenth century, so that the Abbot of Tor granted building leases, obtained licence for a weekly market and an annual fair, and called it his "Nova Villa." To this day it has retained this name, Anglicised into Newton Abbot, and it has found such further development from being a railway centre that it has devoured its own mother, and Wolborough is now merely reckoned as part of its urban district. Sir Richard, for his new building, chose the site of an existing house near the town and named from its position on the bank of the Aller River where there was the convenience of a ford. To-day the flourishing and pushing town threatens to engulf it, though as yet the modern villa keeps a respectful distance, and merely peers through the venerable wrought-iron gateway which opens to the well-timbered meads in which it sits. It is a long, low and



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THE DINING-ROOM.

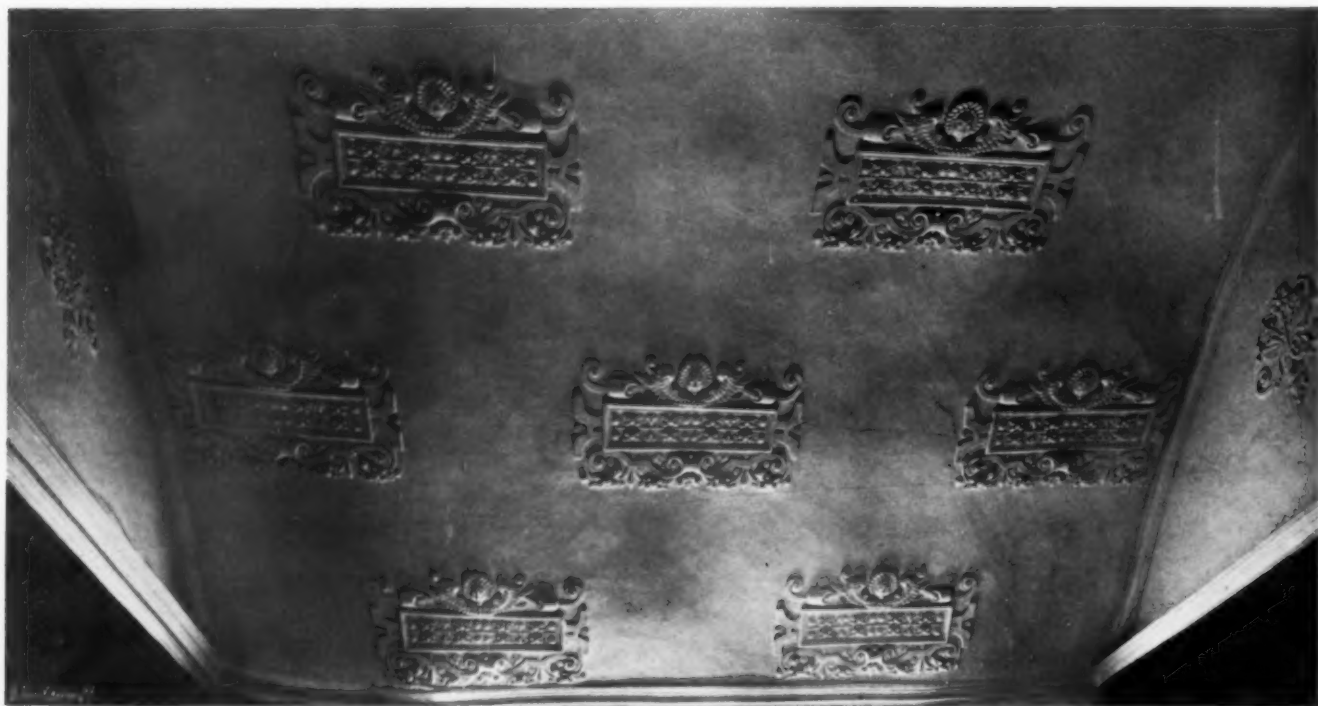
"COUNTRY LIFE."



THE HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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CEILING IN THE WILLIAM OF ORANGE ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

somewhat flat-roofed building, whose plain shape and rough-cast walls seem insufficiently relieved by the projecting porch and wings, and by the windows, whose original stone mullions have been in many cases poorly replaced and all painted red. Within, however, though modernity rules in the form of uncompromising wall-papers of furious colour and pattern, yet there survive the good woodwork and splendid ceilings which we illustrate, and which we have isolated from incongruous surroundings. The hall is a room of the utmost pleasantness. Though but one storey high and of classic proportions, there is just enough trace of Mediaevalism left in the plan for the entrance door to be

placed at the end where the offices began; but, clearly, there never was a screen, as not only is the panelling, with its strapwork frieze, carried all round, but also the design of the ceiling occupies the full space and centres in a great pendant. The oak chimney-piece displays the favourite Jacobean model of twin columns in two tiers, and has an enriched arcade over the hearth, which is enclosed with the depressed arch that lingered as a last trace of Gothic influence far into the seventeenth century. The little inserted modern mantel is unfortunate, for the ironwork of the grate itself is of some age and interest, and would have looked well in the ample



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CEILING OF THE CHARLES I. ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

opening of the original design. All these features of the hall, though good, are normal; the touch of originality lies in the doors, with their cubed or rusticated applied panels, their round arches and their Tudor-rosed spandrels. It is a type which, on a large and elaborate scale and without the rustication of the panels, appears in several of Exeter's older houses, and there is a whole set of similar doors, large and small, at the Abbot Hospital at Guildford, which were illustrated in these pages

parlour is entered, almost a little gallery, occupying the full length of one of the wings of the house and lit at both ends. It is now devoid of interest except for its ceiling, which is a superb example of the fine plaster-work of its age. It is coved, but the cove is prevented by the angle of the roof just above it from occupying the full width of the room, and is therefore supported by bracket-shaped caryatides which break the line of the rich scrollwork of foliated figures which forms the frieze. The ribbing of the



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ENTRANCE FROM THE PORCH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

some two years ago. The front door of Ford opening from the porch is treated simply and severely, but the others, with their pilasters, roses and fans, are of lighter, richer work. Passing through the one beyond the chimney-piece, not without a glance back at the good benchwork that fills the window recesses, we are at the foot of the staircase of massive oak with octagon moulded balusters and newel-posts, and at the top of the stairs the great

ceiling is broad and simple in design, its running ornament being deeper in relief than usual, while the dozen large square panels which it forms contain boldly modelled strapwork cartouches enframing mythical beasts, such as winged horses, unicorns and dragons. Three pendants, of the same outline as that in the hall, but of much greater size and elaboration, break the line of the ceiling and afford hooks whence, originally, depended

chandeliers. The device on the end walls contains crested helms surmounting a shield of Waller impaled with Reynell, a Waller, as we shall see, being Sir Richard's son-in-law. What is remarkable about Ford—a house never either great or sumptuous—is not only the unusual excellence, but also the large number, of these enriched ceilings. It contains seven in all, of which two more of those upstairs and of the coved type are here illustrated. The larger one centres with a fox, the Reynell crest; but its chief beauty lies in the good design and bold workmanship of the ornamentation in the flat of the end walls, of which one, touched by the sunlight streaming through the window, is so admirably and clearly rendered in the picture as to make any word of description needless. The lesser ceiling depends for its enrichment upon a fine cartouche repeated, and the same motif has been used for the deep frieze of the dining-room, which lies under the great parlour, and has a fine chimney-piece, a replica, with variations, of that in the hall.

The year 1610 is given as the date of Sir Richard Reynell's "fair house of Ford," which within that century received two Royal visits under very differing circumstances. The first was in 1625, when Charles I., six months after he came to the throne, was Sir Richard's guest on his way to and also on his return from a visit to Plymouth. For this official Western journey the King had an enormous retinue, beginning with His Grace of Buckingham and four other peers, ending with a jester, and including a Surveyor of the Ways—an attendant who even to day would not be altogether out of place in some of the Devonshire lanes. Both for the outgoing and the return visits Sir Richard's neighbours poured contributions into the Ford larders, which must have been of great size if they were able to hold the multitude of bucks, does, sheep, fowls, salmon, partridges, pheasants, quails, barnacles, larks, seapies and gulls which were among the provisions gathered together. So liberal, indeed, were the knight's friends in helping him with gifts in kind that the whole of the grand double reception of the

the Prince of Orange moved into Newton Abbot on the 7th, where a "certain divine" read his declaration on market day and had the church bells rung. The Prince himself went to Ford House, where he found "provision of suitable hospitality and accommodation," but had the place to himself. His landing had been expected on the East Coast, where his partisans were ready, but coming suddenly in the West, which still smarted from Jeffreys's bloody assize, he received at first a very hesitating welcome.

Between these two Royal visits much had happened of a public and of a private nature which had affected the fortunes of Ford. Sir Richard Reynell married his only child to Sir William Waller, who had earned his knighthood by fighting in Germany on behalf of Charles I.'s sister and brother-in-law, the titular King and Queen of Bohemia. After his return to England and his marriage he developed hostility to the Court and strong Parliamentary leanings, which were accentuated by a quarrel with his father-in-law's nephew, Sir Thomas Reynell of the Ogdell branch, who was Server-in-Ordinary to the King. He and Waller discussed a matter so hotly on the doorstep of Westminster Hall that the latter resorted to his fists. The assault was declared to have taken place within the precincts of the Court, and the Star Chamber fined the assailant heavily. After that he became a Presbyterian member of the Long Parliament and second in command of the Parliamentary forces under Essex. Ere this his connection with Ford had practically ceased. We hear of him there frequently both before and shortly after 1633, in which year both his father-in-law and his first wife died, her infant son shortly following her. In Wolborough Church we see the child in effigy lying below his mother, both of them being in front of the great canopied slab on which Sir Richard and Dame Lucy sleep in alabaster, watched by figures of Proserpine and Saturn. Dame Lucy, however, did not join the other three for many years; she lived on at Ford till 1652, and was celebrated for her deeds of charity. It was she who built the almshouses which



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CEILING OF THE GREAT PARLOUR.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

King on September 15th and 24th cost him but the moderate sum of £83 18s. 5d. Charles was, of course, lodged in the State chamber next to the great parlour, which has ever since been called after him; but when, sixty-three years later, his nephew paid Ford a visit at an awkward moment, tradition placed him to sleep in the smaller room with the cartouche ceiling, and he found no host at home to receive him. Landing at Torbay on November 5th, 1688,

still stand at the bottom of Church Hill, and endowed them for "Wyddowes of preaching Ministers," who were to go to church three times a week, to be of "Godly lyef and civell conversation," were not to lodge any male on the premises, or let beer, ale, wine or tobacco ever be found there. The mistress of Ford tempered her benevolence with discipline, and was determined that the participators in her endowment should behave themselves.

Meanwhile her own premises cannot have been very comfortable, for during the Civil War Ford House was thrice taken by one side or the other; but how far Dame Lucy stood her ground and continued in occupation does not appear. As Sir William Waller married again and had a second family, Margaret Waller, his only surviving child by his first wife, was probably brought up by her grandmother, and eventually married and brought the Wolborough property to a Devonshire man and a Royalist husband in the person of Sir William Courtenay of Powderham Castle. He it was who, in right of his wife, was the owner of Ford on the occasion of William of Orange's visit, and he had, therefore, the excuse for his absence that Powderham was his home, as it has continued to be that of his descendants. The scarcity of heirs that had distinguished the Reynell and Waller occupation of Ford now ceased. Sir William and Margaret his wife had nineteen children, and it is their male descendants who, ever since, have held Powderham and Ford, and on whose behalf the Earldom of Devon was called out of abeyance in 1831. The story of the Courtenays, however, belongs to Powderham and not to Ford, which under them has seen little of its lords, has suffered from repeated tenancies and has tended towards neglect and decay. So far as its structure is concerned, however, it has lately been so well and thoroughly repaired by the present Earl of Devon that it should long remain the safe envelope of old Sir Richard's fine ceilings and woodwork, and live, perhaps, to see them associated with fit decorative company.



Copyright THE REYNELL TOMB IN WOLBOROUGH CHURCH.

"C.C."

WILD COUNTRY LIFE

BIRDS AND BUTTERFLIES.

IN the first volume of the new and sumptuous work on the "Birds of Great Britain and Ireland," by Mr. A. G. Butler, with illustrations by Messrs. Grönvold and Frohawk, I am astonished to find, on page 75, this remarkable passage: "The food of the garden warbler in spring and summer consists very largely of spiders, insects and their larvae, the caterpillars of the two smaller cabbage butterflies (*Ganoris rapæ* and *G. napi*) being favourite articles of diet largely used for feeding the nestlings," to which is appended this footnote: "These larvae are eaten with avidity by all insectivorous birds; whereas the caterpillars of the large cabbage butterfly (*G. brassicæ*) seem to be offensive to nearly all. Why this should be the case, when one sees that all three caterpillars eat the same leaves and produce very similar butterflies (which are eaten indiscriminately), is a poser." All of which is to me altogether amazing.

CABBAGE BUTTERFLIES AND OTHERS.

In the first place, to class *G. rapæ* and *napi* together as "the two smaller cabbage butterflies" is surely absurd. The former (the small white or small cabbage white) may be called a "cabbage butterfly" fairly enough,

But *G. napi* is the green-veined white, which is eminently not a cabbage butterfly. It does not "eat the same leaves" as the other two. While those other two are notorious garden pests, the caterpillar of the green-veined white does not (or is not known to, and certainly, if at all, does only in exceptional instances) feed on any plant of the cabbage family. It feeds on various cruciferae, such as the hedge-garlic (its favourite food), water-cress, winter-cress, etc. The butterfly is so common that it is often seen in gardens; but it differs essentially from the other two (the true "cabbage butterflies") by being more peculiarly a creature, not of the garden, but of the field and lane and hedgerow. It seems incredible that Mr Butler could make the statement that the particular caterpillar was a favourite food of the garden warbler, unless he had actually seen the garden warbler eating it; and it is plain that he could not make the statement in the form in which he does unless he had seen it eating it off the leaves of cabbages, etc., in the vegetable garden. I am immensely interested to know when this occurred.

DO BIRDS EAT THEM?

Mr. Butler then throws out casually the assertion that all three white butterflies "are eaten indiscriminately" by birds. Are they? I thought it was generally accepted that none of them was ever eaten. In a good many years when I have been on the look-out to see a bird catch and eat a white butterfly, I have never yet seen it. I have, indeed, seen birds, especially swallows, apparently in mere sport, strike at a white butterfly and chip a piece out of its wing; but I have seen no bird catch and eat one. Nor is my experience different from that of other observers. The question whether any bird ever eats any butterfly has been somewhat extensively argued lately, and while thousands of observers (entomologists and ornithologists) must have followed the discussion with interest, no one has been able to adduce any examples of a bird eating a butterfly

beyond a few cases where the food was either the meadow brown or large heath (*E. janira* or *E. tithonus*) or the green hairstreak. That birds do eat the last-named seems to be proved, which presumably accounts for the bright green hue of the under side of the wings of that insect, a tint unique among our butterflies, which renders its possessor practically invisible when at rest.

NEGLECTED FRASIS.

I am not prepared to make the sweeping statement that, with the exception of this one species, birds never eat butterflies; but the thing is certainly so rare that I am tempted to believe that when observers have reported that they have seen a bird eat either the meadow brown or the large heath they were mistaken, and the insects really caught were moths—either *E. mensuraria* or *H. proboscidalis* or some other species which can easily be mistaken for a butterfly of the genus *Epinephele* when on the wing. If birds eat these butterflies at all, why are they not always doing it? How comes it that either of these species may be seen in hundreds flitting about a particular hedge or meadow entirely disregarded by the birds? Why do not the birds gather from all the neighbourhood round and feast, for anything more easily captured by a bird than a meadow brown or a large heath it is difficult to imagine?

A PERSECUTED MOTH.

And the same applies to white butterflies. Why are not birds for ever chasing white butterflies about our gardens? Surely the insects are

conspicuous enough! How comes it that they flutter unmolested about every flower-bed and kitchen garden, with sparrows on every water-pipe and warblers in each shrubbery? I once happened with two other men (both excellent naturalists) to see a curious object-lesson bearing on this particular point. We were sitting at the side of a lawn over which butterflies, white and otherwise, flew at frequent intervals; and it was a true bird sanctuary. Flycatchers sat on the croquet hoops; sparrows, greenfinches, robins, wrens, blackcaps, whitethroats and many other birds had nested in the foliage round. But not a bird paid any attention to any butterfly. Then, as we watched, a swallow-tail moth, disturbed by some accident in midday, came blustering across the lawn, and in an instant there was a hue and cry after it. Half-a-dozen birds, at least, made shots at it before it was finally captured. We took it at first to be a white butterfly, and were astonished to see birds chasing it. Then to one of us the truth occurred, and we recovered the wings, which the bird (I forget what bird it was) that caught it dropped, and verified the fact. Now a swallow-tail moth is not much unlike a white butterfly on the wing, but the birds knew the difference at once.

EDIBLE HAIRSTREAKS.

On one other occasion the owner of that lawn saw a bird try to catch a butterfly. He was astonished to see more than one bird chasing what he took to be a small meadow brown. At last a flycatcher knocked the insect to the ground almost at my friend's feet. He picked it up and found a white-letter hairstreak (*T. W-allum*), a butterfly which he did not know was to be found in the neighbourhood; and the incident has a curious bearing on what has been said about that insect's cousin, the green hairstreak. Arriving at the

house shortly afterwards, I was shown the butterfly (still just alive) and I set it for preservation as a curiosity.

TASTINESS AND COLORATION.

Therefore, as I say, I am altogether amazed at Mr. Butler's statements. Perhaps birds eat butterflies oftener than we know; but to say off-hand that all three species of common white are "eaten indiscriminately" is, to say the least of it, rash. And when one of these species is not a "cabbage butterfly" at all, and does not eat "the same kind of leaves" as the other two, what becomes of the whole of Mr. Butler's interesting speculation? The facts, I believe, to be as follows: (1) Birds do not eat (except perhaps on the rarest occasions) any one of the three kinds of white butterfly, wherefore Nature has not taken the trouble to give them any protective coloration, but they flutter about ridiculously conspicuous and no bird pays attention to them; (2) birds do not appear to eat the caterpillar of the large white (though I have some misgiving on the subject), which is also permitted to be striped and conspicuous in colouring and has a habit of crawling up black palings and similar objects, in order to pupate, where, if it was worth eating, every bird in the parish would see it; (3) birds, I suspect, do eat the caterpillar of the small white—wherefore, in its early stages, that caterpillar is precisely the colour of the leaves on which it feeds, and doubtless thereby escapes a number of its enemies. In its later stages it is sufficiently striped to be roughly mistakable for the caterpillar of the large white, and then, I imagine, birds often pass it by as too suggestive of the other and unwelcome kind; (4) I do not know whether any bird eats the caterpillar of the green-veined white; nor, I opine, if he thinks he has seen birds eating them off cabbages, does Mr. Butler.

H. P. R.

THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY, WOLBOROUGH.

ST. MARY'S, Wolborough, is, as we have seen in dealing with Ford House, the mother church of Newton Abbot, on to which busy town it looks down from its quiet hill site. Its font of red gritstone with cable and chevron moulding seems the only relic of the original Norman

church which stood here before William Briwere founded Tor Abbey in 1196 and purchased from a namesake the manor and parish of Wolborough to form a portion of the endowment of his religious house. The development of Newton by the Abbots made Wolborough a profitable possession, and it was also within easy

reach of Tor. Its church, therefore, seems generally to have been served by the canons of Tor and to have received much care and attention from them. It dates mainly from the fourteenth century, but there is much work of the fifteenth and even of the sixteenth centuries, and some quite early alterations and repairs are curious. For instance, several of the fine Perpendicular windows in the nave aisles combine two materials and two styles of moulding. The shafts are of Dartmoor granite and the outer member of their mouldings is a torus or half-circle, but the elaborate tracery of the upper part of the windows is of white freestone with a flat outer member. There is no recent restoration about these windows, which, indeed, retain their original iron bars and glazing. The latter takes the form of curved and oval bands of coloured glass pleasantly relieving the plain glass without great elaboration or cost. It is well worth the attention of architects, as the result is most satisfying and the method applicable to both ecclesiastical and domestic buildings. Granite likewise appears as the material of the south doorway and of certain square-headed windows of a Henry VIII. type; but most of the dress work is of freestone both inside and out, and the carvings of the capitals of the nave columns, of which are here illustrated two, are noticeable. They represent incidents of the wood and field, as a pig eating acorns, birds pecking berries, a blinking owl, slugs and snails among foliage; and a twin-bodied beast whose kind we will not venture to specify. Originally the woodwork in the church must have been magnificent, and there is



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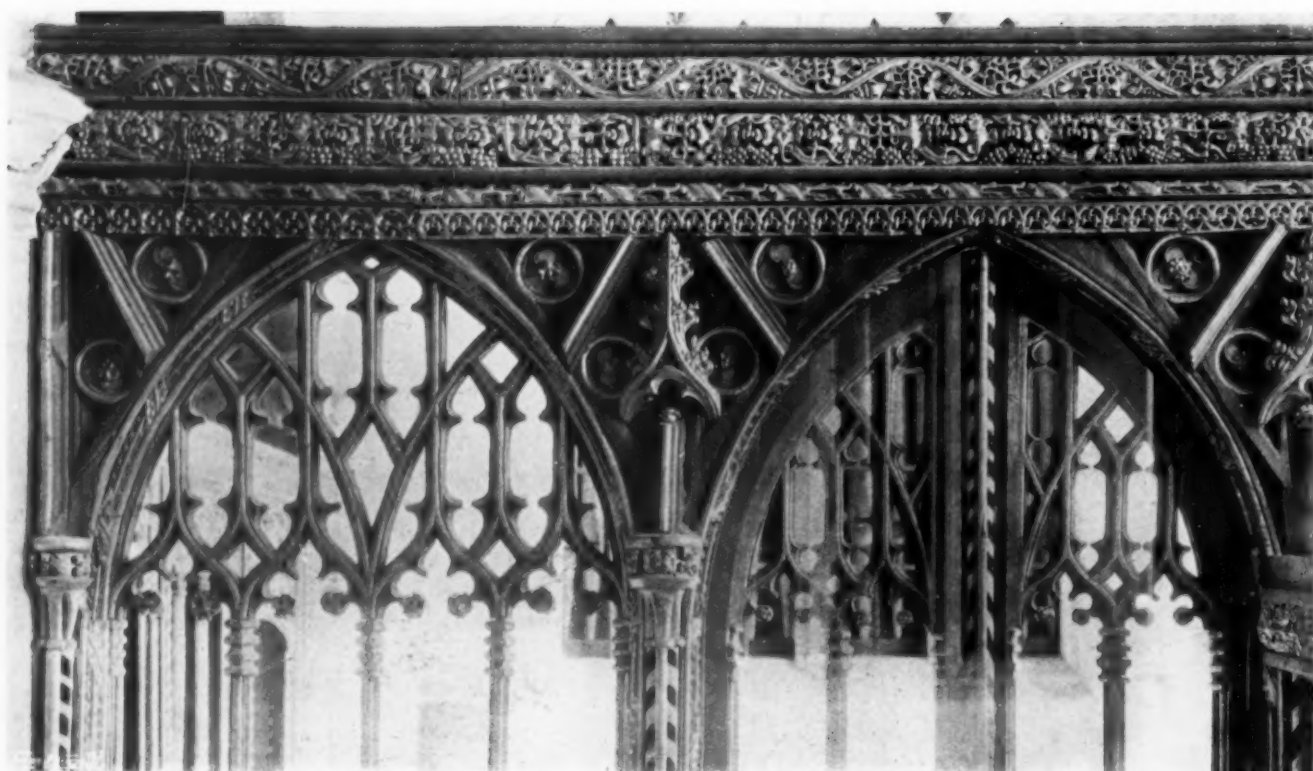
NORTH PARCLOSE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE SCREEN.



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DETAILS OF THE SCREEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

much interest in what remains. The rood-loft has been utterly destroyed, but the screen which supported it remains with certain members and fragments of the rood-loft somewhat barbarously affixed to its upper portion. From the capitals of the little columns, which occupy the space between the traceried apertures, used to spring the chief member of the fan vaulting which ornamented the space beneath the breastsummers of the loft floor, and in front of these ran the many-membered cornice, with its vine patterns *à jour*, which is now set flat against the screen, the spandrels below it being filled up with haphazard odds and ends. These include portions of the crocketed canopies of the niches from the rood-loft frontal, which must therefore have been of the same kind as the one ancient surviving example at Atherington, and as those modern examples, copied from it, lately placed in the churches of Staverton and Kenton. In these two latter cases the screen may be rightly termed "restored," but to apply that term to the formless patchwork of the Wolborough and many other Devon screens is, of course, ridiculous. Passing to the lower part of the Wolborough screen, it will be found remarkably fine and in an excellent state of preservation, except that there has been rather too much repainting, especially of the figures in the lower panels, many of which appear clearly in our picture. With the general history and particular characteristics of the fine rood-screen work which invaded Devon churches in the fifteenth century, and whose active course was only arrested by the fatal hand of the Reformation, it is proposed to deal in subsequent articles. We shall there find the same prevalence of painted figures as in the Eastern Counties; but hardly in any Devon church is there so large and well preserved a series as in St. Mary's, Wolborough. They not only occupy all

the panels of the screen, which stretches across both aisles as well as across the chancel, but also appear on the parclose or pew screens which occur in each transept, and of which the northern one is illustrated, because of the exceptional fact that



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CAPITAL IN NAVE.

"C.L."



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CAPITAL IN NAVE.

"C.L."

here the figures are "quite in their original condition and have neither been retouched nor repainted," as have nearly all the rest. Yet, even of these, enough of the old painting survived to enable, in most cases, the saints, apostles or martyrs portrayed to be identified by the distinctive emblem that accompanies them. This task proved of some difficulty, as some of the figures represent worthies who, to say the least, are not universally known. Such is the figure of Sir John Shorne, which the lectern unfortunately conceals in the picture given. He was a thirteenth century Buckinghamshire rector and an uncanonised saint prayed to in cases of ague. He is said to have confined the devil in a boot; he carries the boot in his hand, and out of it peers the captive encircled with flames. He belongs rather to Eastern Counties' screens, and his inclusion in a Devon series is exceptional. Exceptional, too, in England, is his neighbour on the Wolborough screen, Bishop Honorius, with a baker's shovel. Next to him, and no longer concealed by the lectern, may be recognised Saints Cosmo and Damien, while St. Julian and St. Irenaeus, Isaac and Abraham complete the series up to the open door into the chancel. As a favourite possession of their abbey, the monks of Tor very likely themselves painted the Wolborough screen, and doubtless the house held recruits from distant counties and even foreign lands who suggested local saints. The brass lectern to which allusion has been made should not be overlooked, as it is of original Gothic workmanship. The

column rises from a base supported by four sejan lions, and on the globe stands an eagle with silver claws. Tradition states it to have been hidden away upon Bovey Heath during the great Rebellion, and to have been restored to its church when Charles II. was restored to his throne. Its silver claws, however, were tempting and disappeared, but have recently been renewed. Remnants of ancient painted glass more elaborate than that already mentioned appear in many of the windows. In some cases portions of saints are seen, in others complete coats of arms of benefactors or territorial magnates, such as Briwere and Courtenay. A member of the latter family released some Wolborough lands to the Abbey of Tor in the thirteenth century. This proves the Courtenay connection with the parish long before Sir William Courtenay followed the Reynells at Ford, and his grandson, in 1710, "beautified" the church, as an inscription still testifies. It would then have been fitted with the panelled pews, which are still remembered, but are now replaced by deplorable varnished pitch pine seats—that most terrible yet typical form of "modern improvement." T.

FROM THE FARMS.

LABOURERS' WAGES.

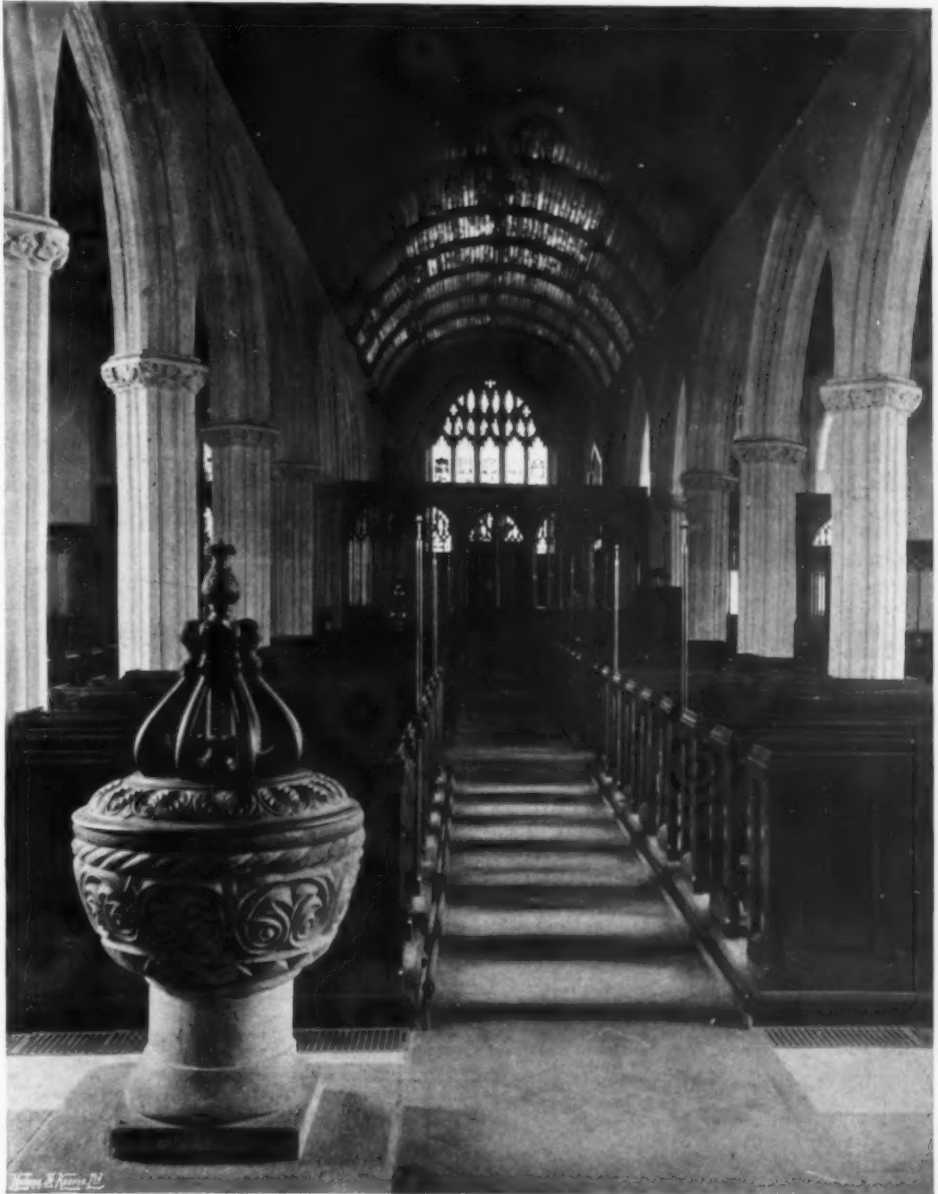
THE first hiring markets of the year are held in the North of England and in Scotland, and the accounts of some of them are now before us. A comment very generally made is that employers depend much less on these meetings than used to be the case. They now prefer to advertise their requirements in the local newspapers, and indeed the pages of these show this to be the case. Within the last year or two columns of "Wanted" advertisements have been appearing in country newspapers which only used to have two or three announcements of the kind. No doubt both master and servant find convenience in this method of seeking each other. It gives them more time to make enquiry and to consider than is afforded by the process of a casual meeting in the street of a country town and an engagement formed upon this very superficial acquaintance. There are many who remember when labourers were required to show their muscle and subject themselves generally to an inspection in order that their fitness might be discovered; but those days are over. The majority of masters want character as well as physique. At the markets that have been held very good wages have been forthcoming, 18s. a week in money having been offered and taken for first-class hands, and 17s. for second-class; and, of course, the money payment is by no means all. Along with it go from 1,000yds. to 1,800yds. of potatoes in the fields of the farmer, bags of meal, pasturage for a cow, a free cottage and other incidentals which, taken together, ought to make the life of the Northern farm labourer a very comfortable one.

Women are still employed to a very large extent on these farms, and the wages at which they have been hired this year are 10s. and 11s. a week; and 3s. a day for twenty days' employment during harvest. This is very good earning for a single woman, but not more than has been obtained for some years past. The inference to be drawn from the hardening in the demand for good wages is that the rural exodus has not yet ceased in the Northern part of the kingdom, but that it still is responsible for a scarcity of labour. Nor can this be wondered at, because the rival to the farm in that country is the coalpit. The miners have done exceptionally well during the year 1907, and whenever this is the case they attract to their ranks all that is floating in the region of farm labour. It may be said that national prosperity has now received a check, and commodities generally, especially coal, have shown a tendency recently to decline in value. But some time always elapses before a movement of this kind affects the ranks of labour,

and it would appear that this point has not so far been reached.

EFFECTS OF SPRING SNOW.

The early March of 1908 is likely to leave an evil memory behind it. As long as February lasted farmers did not grumble much at stormy weather, and those who had gardens were glad that the premature growth promoted by the sunshine of the first fortnight of the month should have received a check. We have, however, pointed out before, and recent communications endorse the opinion, that as far as the farm is concerned those crops that stand out during the winter have shown less vitality than usual. We have known beans, for instance, survive much harder frosts than we have had this year, and winter wheat has even sprung up with great vigour after days of low temperature such as were not experienced during the past winter. On the other hand, the blowing of cold, frosty winds, even when



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FROM WEST TO EAST.

"COUNTRY LIFE"

the temperature is not abnormally low, has a blighting effect on vegetation, and to this may in part be due the backwardness of many green crops. On the other hand, there is no doubt something in the contention that after a hot summer the land has stored up a reserve of heat that makes itself felt in the following spring; whereas a wet and cloudy summer is nearly always followed by a spring in which the growth is long delayed and feeble. Such a theory would account for the low vitality in many crops this year.

MANURE ON GRASS LAND.

From University College, Reading, we have received a pamphlet describing the experiments which were tried during last year. The reason for attempting them was that much of the grass land in Great Britain, through constant cropping and grazing without adequate application of suitable manures, has been robbed of most of its available plant food,

and it is a problem of supreme importance to determine what is needed and how to supply what is needful economically. Two things we require to secure this end—one an analysis and examination of the soil, and the other a trial of various manurial substances. At present the results are published without much comment, but we are promised more specific information later. Mr. John Percival, who signs the report, says that "at some of the centres where the land was grazed this year it was most interesting to notice that, while the grass on some of the plots was eaten close to the ground, on others it was left to go to seed. This was particularly noticeable where basic slag had been applied on plots situated on the Earl of Buckinghamshire's estate at Hampden and on Mr. Landon's field, Stoke Road, near Aylesbury." We cannot go through the experiments in detail, but select one example at haphazard, namely, that on the Earl of Buckinghamshire's land at Hampden. The use of 5cwt. of basic slag and 5cwt. of kainit per acre resulted in an increase in the weight of hay of 15½cwt., at a value of

13s. 6d. With 1cwt. of nitrate of soda, when used with the same quantity of kainit as before, the weight of hay was increased by 1 ton and the value by 22s. Nitrate of soda and basic slag used in conjunction (1cwt. of the former and 5cwt. of the latter) gave an increase in weight of 18½cwt., valued at 19s. 6d. The use of 1cwt. of nitrate of soda, 5cwt. of basic slag and 3cwt. of kainit resulted in an increase of 1 ton ½cwt. in weight, valued at 23s. In comparison with these combinations, it is interesting to compare the results produced by the use of one manure only. Sixteen loads of dung produced an increase in weight of 17cwt., valued at 16s.; 5cwt. of basic slag gave an increase of 15½cwt., valued at 12s. 6d.; 3cwt. of kainit gave an increase of 13½cwt. of hay, valued at 8s. 6d.; 1cwt. of nitrate gave an increase of 15½cwt. of hay, valued at 12s. 6d.; 4cwt. of basic super gave an increase of 1 ton 1½cwt., valued at £1 5s. 6d. A note is appended to the report that the land was grazed in 1907, and the great preference shown by cattle for the plots on which phosphates had been applied was very marked.

RELICS OF AUTUMN.

THOUGH the swallow has decked herself in many places with her pearls, and the bulbs are daily showing more and more, and the larks are mounting their aerial stairways to pour forth thrilling song in gladness for a glimpse of sun, it is not wise to think that spring is here, for winter has not lost hold yet. Rather see what is left of autumn and last year's flowers; relics they are, but still they have a beauty if you will look for it, and a story, as all things have. In the garden these are gone, cut by the gardener's knife and given to the rubbish pile, from all but one bed, a poppy bed, spared for a lady's sake. On this the summer sun looked down and found a blaze of colour, formed of petals soft and tender, so sensitive that they could only last a day or two; but others came to fill their places, eager to find the sun and enjoy their little life in it. So for weeks the pageant of colour continued, cheering the garden and those who loved it, till the poppies had extracted all the moisture from the soil. Then the short-lived flowers decreased in number rapidly, there was left only here and there a touch of pink or crimson and eyes were turned to different borders for the time. Others there were besides ourselves in the garden who watched the poppies, and with sharper eyes. These were the tits, gay and mischievous, who would have a mouthful out of each of ten apples sooner than ten mouthfuls out of one; for which, no doubt, the wasps were grateful. They watched the swelling heads of the poppies, till a lovely grey-blue told that they were fully grown, and then attacked them. They would fly and settle on the stems, work their way up them jerk by jerk till the head bent nearly to the ground, and then, hanging back downwards, they would rip it up, seam after seam, scattering the seed around in sheer extravagance. This was such fun that apples were forgotten, and there was



HEMLOCK.



THE GAUNT TEASEL.

like a little lobster-pot on a pole. The autumn sun distorted these skeletons and turned them brown, but the winds of winter have only felled the weakest; the rest yet stand to tell their tale and bring back happy memories of sunny days. The tits often go to visit them still to see if, perchance, they have left any intact. Only the gardener dislikes them, wondering why his mistress insists on having

them left. He does not wonder long, however, because he has found that, if he does, he gets no nearer to an understanding of her ways.

Out in the fields are a few false signs of spring. The hazels have hung their golden catkins out for the breeze to blow the pollen where it will; the willow and willow, beloved as "palm" by the village boys and girls, are dotted with pearls; the grass, after a few mild days, shows greener at the

roots, and so do many plants; but the landmarks in the fields of the birds and animals are



ALL COLOURLESS NOW.

autumn's relics. Where the arable meets the common there are a few neutral yards of ground covered with hemlocks, a perfect forest, each one with its erect stem and graceful branches suggesting the idea of candelabra from Nature's decoration. When the leaves and flowers were on them, and the grass was drawn up high beneath the shade they made, they formed a jungle in which the young life of many a bird was spent. Then came the fall and turned the flowers to seed, food for the birds; then came the winter and stopped all sap, and, with the aid of frosts, dried stem and branch, leaving the framework only. It is strong and rigid as it ever was, but no bird now makes use of it; it affords no shade and they need none; it offers no cover; the linnets ignore it, and when disturbed make for the gorse or hawthorn; yet these hemlocks are almost trees to look upon—are taller, in fact, than many junipers that can be seen from them. Beside them grows the knapweed, rarely among them, for it loves the light and air, and in its search for it reaches nearly to the common; not quite, because it needs more moisture and more shelter than the rock-rose and the milkwort that seem to thrive with only chalk from which to draw

their life. The knapweed now has lost its purple flower; but the heads are there showing black against a rimy grass of mornings, and opening slightly to the sun at midday, as though they yet contained some seeds to harvest. In the same area are skeletons of wild carrot, their long flower-stalks waving their dried seed clusters at every breath of wind—they look so fragile that one wonders always how they survive; but they are top-heavy in appearance only, for the seed clusters are light as the wind that stirs them, and their stems are pliant and strong. Dotted here and there are thistles of all kinds; till recently the Scotch ones had kept their purple flowers and vivid green leaves, thanks to the mildness of the weather; but some damp frosts and cutting winds proved too much for even their brave hearts, and now they hang their heads of silver-grey, and look down at their stem and leaves, and find that they are all one colour, or all lack it.

But, no; there are flashes of colour, for the goldfinches in their harlequin dress have found them, and are busy with their little iron bills, pulling their heads to pieces to search for the seeds that are not there, because the winter sun harvests nothing. No need to pity their disappointment. They soon discover their mistake, and make for other things; besides, food of all kinds must be plentiful, else so many hips would not be left on the thorns. Where the larger thistles stop, the common proper starts, and lacks all the bigger, coarser plants, but in exchange offers some beauty of its own. There is the golden thistle, a tiny gem of grace, with stem no longer than a lady's finger, raising her mignon face; when the sun shines, her petals unfold and reflect its rays, smiles answering smiles. When the south-west wind drives clouds of moisture, unchecked by trees, across this downland, she hides her eyes and waits with Nature's patience for the sun to come again. Companion to her, and of equal grace, stands the hawkweed; she is, like others of the chalk, small in stature, but, unlike others, very slim in build; she carries on her slender stem one or two small round balls of golden cotton, so exquisite in their softness that even the birds seem as if they thought them too lovely to touch. It is here on the open or the borders of it that signs of autumn are most and linger latest; the hedges are bare of leaf long since, and can only show their winter-hardened buds, except at intervals where bryony berries hang discoloured, or traveller's joy has crept up to the top, and would not be noticed except for the old man's beard. In the woods young oaks and beeches hold their last year's leaves, as if they were so proud of having grown them that they hate to push them off; but apart from them there are no relics of autumn except the leaves upon the ground. Beauty there is, as always in the word of Nature, but it must be sought in lines of branches, or the contour of boles, if a walk is taken in the beech drive or down the elm avenue. If you would rather be reminded of autumn, go to the open where plants have their way as they will, and some of their life can still be seen alert. Soon it will be renewed. The gales of equinox will roar through coppice and forest, tearing off limbs where the sap has started to flow, causing creaks and groans on every side; will burst over the downs with hurricane force, laying flat the relics that stood the winter bravely, on over land and water till they are lulled to rest like a tired child, and only the tops of the pines are left to whisper their passing. But these gales are the heralds of Proserpine, and come to tell us that spring herself will shortly follow, hopes be realised and happiness increased.

PHILIP OYLER.



POPPY HEADS RIDDLED BY TITS.

INDIAN WOODS AND FORESTS.

THE present Secretary of State for India could not have more fully or handsomely fulfilled his predecessor's promise—made on March 8th, 1905, through Lord Bath, the Under-Secretary, in reply to a question put by Lord Lytton concerning the training at Oxford of selected probationers for the Imperial Forest Service of India—than by appointing the small committee, announced on February 24th, for the purpose of enquiring into, reporting upon and making recommendations concerning the selection of probationers, and the course of theoretical and practical instruction to be undergone during such period of probationary study as may be considered best. And Mr. Morley has shown his usual sound common-sense in choosing as members of this committee men whose nomination must carry the conviction that their investigations will be impartial and their decision wise and prudent, taking heed not only of matters which happen to affect India to-day, but also looking forward to future requirements both in India itself and in our many Colonies in tropical and sub-tropical parts. For in all of these, and even in Canada, Australia and other Colonies in the temperate zone, the measures this committee may think fit to suggest with special reference to the selection and training of young British subjects for the Indian Forest Service will be of far-reaching effect,

Indeed, they will probably apply immediately to nearly all our Crown Colonies, such as Ceylon, the Federated Malay States, Cape Colony, East Africa, Natal, Nigeria and the Gold Coast, and others, in each of which a Forest Department already forms a branch of the Government administration, and where, consequently, recruitment by properly-trained young officers is a matter of importance. The chairman of Mr. Morley's committee is Mr. Munro Ferguson, M.P., the owner of extensive and well-managed conifer forests on his estates of Novar in Ross-shire and Raith in Fife. This gentleman was chairman of the Departmental Committee on British Forestry appointed by Mr. Hanbury, when President of the Board of Agriculture, in 1902. The other members consist of Sir John Edge of the India Council, formerly Chief Justice in the North-Western Provinces of India; Sir William Thisselton-Dyer, late director at Kew; Mr. E. Stafford Howard, senior Commissioner of Woods and Forests; and Mr. S. Eardley-Wilmot, the present Inspector-General of Forests in India, who is being sent home specially to represent the interests of the Government of India, which is by no means satisfied with the present method of recruiting the Indian Forest Service. Originally, forest conservancy in India sprang up casually in different provinces during the first half of the nineteenth century, the lead in this respect being taken by Bombay and Madras. But soon after the assumption of Government by the Crown, in 1858, it was found desirable to organise and co-ordinate as far as possible these various local and provincial efforts. Thus in 1864 was formed the Forest Department as a subordinate branch of the Public Works Department of the Government of India. At first its officers were a sort of "scratch lot," with a large sprinkling of military men. But from 1866 onwards recruiting has been done by the selection of young British-born subjects, and training them at first for two and a-half years, then subsequently for three years, in European forestry before they were appointed to service in India. From 1866 till 1906 selection was by means of a competitive examination held under the Civil Service Commissioners in London, and from 1867 till 1875 the probationers thus selected were allotted partly to Germany and partly to France. From 1874 till 1885 they were sent only to the French National School of Forestry at Nancy in Lorraine, near the Vosges, and from 1885 till 1905 they were trained at the Cooper's Hill Indian Engineering College at Englefield Green in Surrey. Cooper's Hill had been opened in 1871 for training young men for the Public Works Department in India, and the training of the few telegraph officers needed was also soon undertaken there. But when public works had to be curtailed in India owing to the fall in the value of the rupee, and more especially after the large temporary reduction of establishment that took place in the strength of the department in 1879 and 1880, the number of recruits annually required sank so low as to entail a heavy loss on the working of the college. So, partly to enable it to pay its way, and partly for other reasons, from 1885 onwards the forest probationers were mainly educated at Cooper's Hill, their two years' theoretical course there being followed by extensive tours in France and Germany, and latterly by about a year's residence under a German head-forester in order to become acquainted with practical forestry on a large scale. On the abolition of Cooper's Hill, in July, 1905, and without in any way consulting the wishes of the Government of India, which paid the piper and should therefore have had a right to call the tune, the Secretary of State transferred the two Professors of Forestry to Oxford. There the theoretical instruction previously given at Cooper's Hill has been continued from October, 1905, the curriculum consisting of a two years' collegiate course in forestry and the cognate sciences, followed by one year's practical work in Germany. But as this arbitrary action and official preference really meant a grant of £1,200 a year to Oxford, being the amount of the salaries paid to the two professors, Cambridge naturally began to ask questions in Parliament; and the result of these questions was that in March, 1905, a formal promise was given in the House of Lords that the matter would be reconsidered in three years' time; that is to say, in March, 1908. So Mr. Morley has redeemed Mr. Brodrick's promise by appointing this committee. In order to be able to satisfy itself fully, and to be in a

position to make sound and well-considered recommendations for the future recruiting for the Indian Forest Service, the committee will no doubt have to examine the existing conditions of service and see if these are such as may be reasonably expected to attract exactly the class of young man that the Government of India may desire to have as executive and administrative officers in charge of woodland estates representing an enormous capital still capable of vast financial improvement under sound and prudent management. As a recent organisation in 1906 improved the salaries, it is in the poor pensions sanctioned that the weak spot will be found, for forest officers have during these last twenty years been shabbily treated on this point in comparison with public works and telegraph officers. It was for this reason that the system of selection by open competition, obtaining since 1866, broke down completely in 1906, when the nineteen appointments offered went a-begging and nominations were given "by selection" without any examination at all. This method of nomination in 1906 and 1907 has

excited great discontent in India, while the arbitrary quasi-endowment of Oxford has called forth equal indignation in Britain. As the Universities of Edinburgh, Newcastle, Bangor and Cambridge provide forestry instruction and confer degrees or diplomas of forestry, and as forestry is also taught at Cirencester, Downton, Aspatria, Wye and other agricultural colleges, the Indian and all our Colonial Services might now quite easily be recruited by means of competitive examinations in forestry among students with certificates or diplomas from such institutions; and the probationers thus selected can probably best be trained specially for their future duties by endowing one Chair of Indian Forestry at Oxford and another at Cambridge—where most of the Indian Civil Service probationers study—and by making this specialised course extend over one academic year (October till June), to be followed by an extensive tour on the Continent. This would suit Colonial as well as Indian requirements, for Colonial forestry must look far more to our Indian methods and experience than to any Continental model furnished by France or Germany.

J. NISBET.

THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY SPORTS.

It has often been urged as a reproach against the manhood of Englishmen that they have been beaten of late years in athletic sports by competitors from other lands. However, it is a matter for thankfulness that the traditions of centuries prevail and that men at the Universities continue to amuse themselves without altering their course a point for all the advice so liberally tendered them. To win is good; to be beaten after a good fight is bad luck; but either way they have had their fun and the world may go hang. They still, as their fathers before them, row or run because it amuses them to do so. Crowds may come to watch them if they like. They might just as well stay away for all the difference it would make to the rowers or the runners. With them the sport of the contest is everything—the stern delight of battle with their peers. Their want of systematic training is often sneered at. Certainly those who hurl this accusation broadcast can have little knowledge of a seat in the College boat, to say nothing of the Trials or the Varsity Eight. For the rest—in cricket, football or the running track—much is left to the individual. And herein his character benefits, if his muscles may not attain the perfection of development displayed by the slave of



THE FINISH OF THE HUNDRED YARDS.

a professional trainer. For remember the gentleman is not always so solicitous to excel as in some quarters it is supposed. He is anxious to do well; but for the rest he is quite as often as not content to leave "laurels," championships and so on to anyone who wants them badly enough to make them sole objects of existence. He prefers to take his fun and pass on to other things. During the last week at both Universities they have been quietly getting through the events which decide both who are the best men of the year, and also who will do battle in the inter-University Sports at Queen's Club later on. Very wisely, as is the practice at several of our Public Schools, no attempt was made to get through the whole card on one short winter's day. The track was in fairly good order by Tuesday mid-day, though it had been covered with snow in the early morning, and the low temperature no doubt had some effect on the "times," good as several of them were. Mr. K. Powell, of Rugby and King's, won the Hurdles in 16 2-5sec., the corresponding time in the final at Oxford this week being 17sec. though the winner had done 2sec. less in a previous heat. Mr. Bellerby of St. Lawrence's and Emmanuel won the High Jump with 5ft. 6in., as did Mr. Stevens, an American, at Oxford. In the One



MR. C. H. WILLIAMS OF ST. LAWRENCE'S AND EMMANUEL.

Mile Mr. Just of St. Paul's and Trinity made his own pace throughout and was timed home in 4min. 34 2-5sec. This race was won at Oxford by Mr. Hallows in 4min. 30 3-5sec. Mr. J. L. Michie of Aberdeen and Trinity won the Putting the Weight with 37ft. 9 3-4in. and then went on with an exhibition put of 39ft. 5 1-2in., which constitutes a record for the University and beats that of the Oxford winner, Mr. Robinson, an Australian, by 2ft. 2 1-2in. On Wednesday Mr. K. G. Macleod managed not only to start in the final for the Hundred Yards, but to get home the winner in 10 2-5sec., as did Mr. Hull at Oxford. Mr. Lindsay-Watson, in an exhibition throw, threw the hammer 139ft. 5in., while at Oxford Mr. Stevens, an American, only managed 124ft. 9in. Mr. Horsefield of Harrow and Trinity took the Quarter in 51 3-5sec., after a tough fight with Mr. Wetenhall all the way; but Mr. Ryle, who did not compete, had done 50 4-5sec. in a preliminary heat. The Oxford time, done by Mr. N. G. Chavasse, was 51sec. The Long Jump fell to Mr. C. H. Williams of St. Lawrence's and Emmanuel with a jump of 21ft. 1 1-2in., 9in. worse than that of Mr. Bleaden at Oxford. Mr. Edwards of Bath and Queen's won the Three Miles in 15min. 26sec., 2sec. behind Mr. Hallows' time at Oxford. The final for the Half-mile was not decided until Saturday, and was won by Mr. T. H. Just in 1min. 58 1-2sec., beating Mr. Rogers's time at Oxford by 3 1-2sec.

It would be useless to attempt to forecast the outcome of the Inter-University Sports by a comparison of the times given here. They are interesting, but nothing more.



MR. R. H. LINDSAY-WATSON.

Cambridge, however, has every reason to be hopeful as to the result at Queen's Club. Mr. Macleod might, all being well, get within one-fifth of a second of "level time" in the Hundred Yards, and the freshman, Mr. Wetenhall, should have a good deal to say as to both that event and the Quarter-mile, which he so hotly contested with the winner. Two records for Fenner's were broken with the Weight and the Hammer, and it is noteworthy that both the winners hail from Scotch schools—Aberdeen and Glenalmond. It may be, too, that the president, Mr. Ryle, who was suffering from a strain and had to stand down on the second day, will be well enough to represent his University in the Sprint and the Quarter-mile. Oxford, too, have had their full share of mishaps, Messrs. C. M. Chavasse and A. M. Stevens both suffering from strains.

On Thursday Brasenose College travelled to Cambridge to meet Emmanuel, and proved too strong for their hosts, winning by seven and a-half events to two and a-half. The Brasenose team included several University choices, Messrs. Hull, Howard Smith, Bleaden and Rogers all winning their events. On Friday, Trinity (Oxford) visited Fenner's to meet Jesus, and a very close and interesting battle took place. The first eight events were evenly divided between them, and not until the last event, the Two Miles, which was won by Mr. Woodman, did the Cambridge college succeed in shaking off their opponents. The match between

Cambridge University and the London Athletic Club, which was arranged for Wednesday in this week, was scratched, as the metropolitan club were unable to raise a team.

SHOOTING.

THE SKATING GUNNER.

"SKATING," growled the old Broadsman, "skating. Well, you may call it skating if you like, but I call it just anticking. Why, a man might do all that hop, skip and jump business—all that twist-arounding and back-sliding—just as well with his skates off as with 'em on. Skating nowadays is more like dancing; there ain't life enough in it to keep a man's toes from freezing. I'd just like some of those anticking dancers who think they're skating to have seen Billy Thrower—aye, even when he was what you might call an oldish man, with a bald head and more than a touch of rheumatics about him in the winter. Why, when Billy was over sixty he could beat half the young fellows in a race of two miles there and back, and he would skate from Oulton Broad to Beccles before breakfast. He was no fancy skater, Billy wasn't. Strap a pair of sound, well-ground pattens on to him, and he would keep on skating straightaway all day with only a crust of bread and a tin of cold tea in his pocket. Stop him you couldn't so long as there was light enough to see ice from water, and you'd never catch him marndering around and around a heap of snow or a lump of ice like a man what have lost sixpence and is trying to find it. Cutting capers and outside-edging might suit young fellows whose sweethearts were looking on; but Billy wanted a clear spin and no finicking. He was a real skater, was Billy, and no mistake."

Old Ben was pacing to and fro on the lock wall, where, with two or three wherrymen and other river-side folk, he was awaiting the arrival of a coal wherry from Yarmouth, casting, meanwhile, an occasional glance of disdainful interest at a party of skaters who were disporting themselves on a flooded and frozen marsh on the opposite side of the river. Floods following a heavy and continuous rain had inundated many acres of marshland, and before the brimming river had fallen to its normal level the hard frost had set in, accompanied by a biting easterly wind, which, blowing day after day, had put a stop to early reed-cutting, driven the eel-pickers to the cosy public kitchen of the Dog and Duck, and given to the wide levels of marshland so bleak and forbidding an aspect that even a hardy wildfowler might have been excused for refusing to venture on to them. But after several days of clouded sky, during which snow seemed always about to fall, though hardly a flake whitened the ground, the sun shone brightly, and a few skaters, despite the bitter keenness of

the wind, came down on to the rough marsh ice. Old Ben, who considered "wind-frost" ice unfit to skate on, watched them curiously for a while, his face wearing much the same expression as does that of the average Broadsman when he sees an inexperienced yachtsman trying to sail a boat. Bob Steggles, who was not without fears that the river would be frozen before he could get his wherry back to Norwich, listened rather impatiently to the old man's grumbling; but his mate on the Wigeon, a young fisherman who was rather proud of his exploits on "pattens," and who himself would have been on the ice had he not left his skates at home, tried, by putting in a word here and there, to keep old Ben in a talkative mood. In this he was successful, for Billy Thrower was a hero in the eyes of the Broadsman, who, given a silent listener, would enlarge upon his wonderful skill and agility for hours together. The sight of a small flock of duck flying up from a distant dykeside reminded him of another of Billy's extraordinary performances.

"Ah! See them duck?" he asked. Then, without waiting for a reply, he went on, "Billy could shoot as well on skates as in a gun-punt or behind a marsh wall. There are folks still living out Rockland way who could tell you something about Billy's shooting. It was while he was living there he won, and more than won, the bet made by the Squire. Never heard the tale? No, it happened afore you could tell a skate from a quant; but I was froze up at Rockland Staithes at the time, and I saw the thing done afore my own eyes. It was a rare hard winter that year, and you might have drove a tumbrel across Rockland Broad without breaking the ice. Plenty of folks came to skate on the Broad, and one day the Squire was there, with a party of young people from The Hall. Billy was there, too, showing folks there was something else in skating besides round-about work, and the Squire, who had been out duck-shooting with him more than once, told his friends something about what he could do with a gun. Seemingly, however, some of 'em didn't quite believe all they heard. For presently the Squire called to Billy and told him that he had made a bet that he (Billy) would shoot a kitty (black-headed gull) while he was skating at full speed. Well, Billy knew that it was worth his while to do his best to please the Squire. So he went for his double-barrelled gun, and then came back to where the Squire was talking with his friends. There were plenty of kitties flying about over the Broad and the marshes, for the sharp weather had driven them in from

the sea; there was a good sheet of ice, too, for the Broad wasn't so 'grown up' then as it is now, and when it was froze there was room on it for racing or any game you might like to play.

"Do your best, Billy," says the Squire; so Billy slipped a couple of cartridges into his gun, went to the edge of the road (bank) on the Rockland side of the Broad, and a clear space was kept for him right across the ice to the mouth of the fleet. He waited for a bit, keeping an eye on the kitties that were flying up from the direction of the river; then he started off. It didn't take him many strokes to get his speed up, and afore he had gone 100yds. he was going at a pace no one on the Broads could beat. Everyone on the ice stood still and watched him, some because they knew what he was trying to do, others because they didn't like the look of a man with a gun skating among them. But they hadn't to watch for long, for when he was within 50yds. of the fleet a kitty came flying over a big sallow bush, and he had it down on to the ice without putting shoulder to gun. He did it so quick that no one knew how he did it, and afore people had done wondering he gave 'em something to wonder at still more; for directly his gun went off three duck got up out of the reeds near the fleet and went flying off towards the river. Billy saw them going, and he covered the rest of the distance to the fleet in three strokes. Then up went his gun, and—you mayn't believe it, but 'tis as true as 'tis that I stand here—with the other barrel he killed two birds out of the three! Squire said as how it was a miracle, and his friends said they'd never seen anything like it in all their lives; but Billy only said it was a pity he hadn't got another barrel to his gun, for then he could have got the other duck."

W. A. DUTT.

HERONS AS FOOD.

A CORRESPONDENT writes to ask us who it is that shoots herons, and why. His enquiry is prompted by the fact that he has seen herons exposed for sale in the poulterers' shops along with other wildfowl. Lately, he writes, he saw one thus exposed in a shop in the Brompton Road, and, asking the man in charge of the shop whether herons were good to eat and what the price was, received the candid answer that the poulterer "would not recommend them," and that the price was eighteen-pence. The sum is moderate; but why then shoot herons, our correspondent asks, if this is all their value? It is to be feared that there is a certain section of the community, that is to say, all who are keen anglers, to whom the question is not so much what is the value of the heron when shot, but how much would it be worth paying a man to shoot him? He is a fisher, destroying great numbers of young fish of all kinds. It is as vermin, not as an edible thing, that he is generally shot. There is no making a heron good to eat. The writer of this note has given fair trial to it and found it wanting in all that goes to make a dish agreeable to the human palate, even after following out most piously the recipe approved by the wisdom of old time; that is to say, burying the carcass, after skinning, for three days. This is supposed to take away all the fishy flavour imparted by the natural food of the bird. Its effect does not bear out the supposition. The flesh remains very fishy, and is hard and tough besides. Our fathers are said to have appreciated the heron very highly, but if so our own taste must be decadent.

SNIFE USING THEIR BILLS IN RISING.

If any who have been fortunate enough to enjoy exceptional opportunities for observing the habits of snipe very near at hand would give us the benefit of their observation it might be most interesting to us, throwing light on the much-vexed question whether these birds (and, if they, then probably woodcock also) really do or do not use their bills to aid them in rising off the ground. Through the courtesy of a Western American correspondent we are able to give the following account of his own personal observation of the matter, he being one of those who certainly have had such exceptional opportunity for a close study of the birds. His letter contains the following remarks on the subject.

WHAT A CALIFORNIAN HAS TO SAY ABOUT IT.

"My friend C—— and I have had unusual chances of seeing snipe on the ground. At the ranch where we lived was a field in which pigs used to root and eat off the green growth. Early in November, after the first rain, this land became nice and boggy, and a very short growth was soon visible—in places hardly any cover. On this ground we have watched the snipe for hours in the morning. They did not seem to mind us on horseback in the least. The snipe were accustomed to feeding among the horses. Time and time again we have seen them turn their backs to the wind, put down their bills and look just as if they were going to turn a somersault. Their wings would fill, as it were, and off they would go, zigzagging about. We tried to shoot some on the ground with a small rifle, just to say we had done such a thing, but although we both were very accurate shots we never succeeded. The snipe were wilder and it was harder to see them when we were on foot than when we were on horseback."

THE DIFFICULTY OF CLOSE STUDY OF SNIFE.

This is a very interesting as well as a very graphic account, and we may perhaps say in parenthesis that the good faith of the writer is quite above suspicion. One interesting point is that which the writer makes about the birds rising down wind, quite contrary to the usual way of waders and other kinds rising off the ground, which always take advantage of the head-to-wind facilities for getting the air beneath their wings—getting their wings "full," as this writer puts it well. It is not always in this country that a snipe bog, or any favourite resort of snipe, is a very good place for riding; there are,

such a facility of observation as this is not often given, although we well know how much more readily many kinds of birds allow themselves to be approached on horseback than afoot. The season is at hand in this country when it is possible to get nearer the birds for close observation than at any other, because of their comparative tameness when nesting. The trouble is that the nesting-time is also a season when there is much cover to hide the little birds. Any information on the point from those who have really had a chance of near study of snipe or woodcock would be interesting.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SKOR-RYPER IN SCOTLAND.

SIR,—It will perhaps prove interesting to have reports sent in regularly by those who, like your correspondent Mr. W. Stuart-Menzies, have "experimented" by introducing willow-grouse (or skor-ryper) to Scottish grouse moors. Personally, and speaking not altogether from a sportsman's plane of view, but also from that of a naturalist, I am against experiments and experiments, for the first and (as I hold) sufficient reason that they are experiments, and that with all experiments we may be on the one side sometimes successful, but on the other it is often impossible to foresee what mischief may be done. Many instances occur to us in which the latter have been proved to be unwise, but comparatively few can be quoted which can be said to have been in all respects satisfactory. And upon such a general fact it seems to me it is easier to err by experiment than to be right, and that therefore experiment is to be avoided. Mr. Stuart-Menzies is quite correct when he says that the statement that rype inhabit an "unoccupied zone between the habitat of the grouse and ptarmigan," etc., is inaccurate and misleading. Certainly it is the birch tracts of Norway that are frequented by "skor," or wood-ryper, and other parts of Northern Europe—the tundras of Russia, for instance—which are on the borders of the birch tracts in latitude, that are occupied by that bird. On the other hand, however, where the open tundra stretches away without any clumps of willow or birch or wood growth for many long versts towards the horizon, willow-grouse are comparatively rarely seen. But I have seen far away on the far-stretching rolling tundra perhaps a few stunted willow bushes, and prominent among their branches the white wing-patches of the summer-plumaged willow-grouse (or the "kouropatki" of the Russians), as I have seen them also along the edges of the blazed or cleared tracks, in their winter plumage, in the great timber tracts, when all the ground was covered deep in snow. The skor-ryper, or wood-grouse, "kouropatki" or tetrao, or *Lagopus albus*, is a wood loving and frequenting species, or variety of our native British heather loving and frequenting *L. scoticus*. What the results may yet be of the experiment of adding another zone to our sporting areas I cannot venture to predict; but if the willow-grouse be the dominant bird in a new struggle for existence on Scottish ground, I may, perhaps, venture to suggest a possible result. Our grouse (*L. scoticus*), if inter-bred through several generations with *L. albus*, may (I do not say will) take to roosting or flying up into willow trees, and to feeding on willow leaves instead of heaths. Then it is true a new zone of sport may be added to the pleasure of those who are not content with our natural insular shootings, and the grouse of the future may offer better sport for the rifle than the shot-gun. This may seem a somewhat exaggerated hypothesis to assume perhaps, but will anyone claim that it is beyond the bounds of possibility? I fancy few will who can look facts in the face both as a sportsman and naturalist. One more remark and I have done. Our black-game are generally on the decrease. If willow-grouse do succeed and increase amazingly, are we "playing fair" to our native game-birds by robbing them of their supply of willow and birch buds?—J. A. H.-B.

SNIFE AND WOODCOCK WEIGHTS.

SIR,—In reply to "H." (COUNTRY LIFE, March 7th), first let me point out that these heavy snipes of which I gave a list as shot by Mr. Haldane in Shetland, were mostly dated November, and were all got in the northern isles of the group, and also that no snipe are allowed to be shot in Shetland before September 1st. Also, I may add, early in September in the marshes of the southern parts—Dunrossness, etc., I have constantly had reported to me "very large snipes rising singly but which only remain a few days." I never shot in Shetland early enough to secure any of these as described by my friend, who is an old sportsman, but when I did go to shoot at that same place, say, ten days or a fortnight later, I never killed a snipe quite up to 50z. in weight. I tried for long to get sent me one of these, as I thought Great Snipe, but it was not till after some years that I got one veritable Great Snipe sent me, which I duly recorded at the time in the *Annals S. N. Hist.* Others were sent me from Dunrossness and also from Lerwick, but all were large common snipe, and none weighed quite up to 50z. Then came one from Mr. Haldane, who had told me that he had heard of common snipe weighing up to 80z., and who desired to prove to me the same. He weighed this one and sent it home, and I also weighed it and found it over the 80z. It was not a Great Snipe but a common snipe. Your correspondent asks about the indication of migration afforded by these extreme weights. The natives are in the habit of speaking of these large (heavy) birds as the home-bred snipe. This, I take it, is by no means proved. And when I add that woodcocks also go up to quite larger weights in the northern isles of Shetland than any returns have shown that they do elsewhere, either in Shetland or on the mainland, and that few, if any, woodcock are hatched off in Shetland at all, it shows, I think, with sufficient clearness that what happens to these migratory woodcock probably also happens to the snipe, whether home-bred or migratory, in November, December and January, which are the months in which I have returns for both species. I have shown also elsewhere (*Annals*) that quite an unusual immigration of woodcocks took place in Shetland in the autumn of 1902 after unusually persistent south-east gales over the North Sea. On arrival these birds were thin, and weighed not much more than 100z., and some as low as 90z., but in a very short time afterwards the weights went up to 150z. and 160z. and

one to 17oz. Now, I have hundreds of weights of game going back to 1861. In most places, 14oz. is underlined as extra heavy weight, and in Shetland about 13'20oz. is the average. In January, 1904, the average was 14'01oz. The lightest weights I have are 9oz. ones. It is all a matter of feeding, as with barndoor fowls, and I doubt if any discovery will be

made by weights as regards migration, though there are some museum naturalists who might even separate 9oz. birds from 16oz. or 17oz. ones, as sub-species, or, which is a little more sensible, as home-bred and foreign.—J. A. HARVEY-BROWN.

[FURTHER NOTES ON SHOOTING WILL BE FOUND ON OUR LATER PAGES.]

ON THE GREEN.

EDITED BY HORACE HUTCHINSON.

SCIENTIFIC COURSE-MAKING.

WE are becoming a little wiser than we used to be, and Braid's recent articles show especially how much wiser our professional brethren are becoming than they used to be, in the problems of laying out courses. We have hunted the matter much closer down to its first principles and realise much more fully the qualities which make a course difficult, interesting and a good and just test of golf. There is only the fear that as we become more scientific we may fall into the worse pit of becoming altogether undramatic. It is not the least necessary that it should be so: if the science is applied properly it ought to have the effect of adding more than a little to the dramatic interest; but unless that interest is kept before the eye of the linkscape gardener he may turn us out a good, but a deadly dull, job.

A "VARIETY SHOW" WANTED.

The first thing to appreciate, by way of shield against this danger, is that the sauce of golf is its variety. When you hear this wisacre and that saying that the course ought to be no cross bunkers, another that there ought to be no running-up shots, and so on, you may know at once that they must all be wrong. Such words as "none" and "all" should not appear in the laws laid down for these matters. We want a little of each—"two pen'orth of all sorts," like the cabman's morning drink—some lofting approaches, some runs-up and so on with the rest of the puzzles. Too much of a dead level is unprofitable, and here and there, say twice in the round, we may even do with a "blind" shot, if it be a long one, right up to the hole. And then we should remember that, since we seldom play in a dead calm, we shall get much more variety from a course which dodges here and there, with holes across and at right angles to one another, than on one which goes straight out and in so that the wind is coming at the same angle all the outward half, and, again, at the same angle (opposite to the former) all the inward half. Observe, too, that if you want your course for big competitions your short holes should be really short ones, taking but few minutes (say four on an average and five at the maximum) in the playing, otherwise a great block will be created—and for the moment that is enough of sapient observations. It is better that the course should be as unscientific as you please in its planning, and still be dramatic, than that it should lose its qualities of interest in the search for science; but the proper application of the science can only result in increasing the dramatic quality. There is a phrase "science falsely so-called," but perhaps this leads us a little off the course.

DINNER AT THE GARRICK.

Mr. Horace Avory, keenest of golfers and K.C.'s, succeeding Mr. Bernard Darwin as captain of the Bar Golfing Society, is also approaching the end of his term of office as captain of the Woking Golf Club. In that capacity he has lately fulfilled the Englishman's duty of giving a dinner—the said dinner being to the committee of the Woking Golf Club, and the guest of the evening Mr. Justice Lawrence, who almost, if not quite, founded the golf club. The last time that I played golf with that very good judge he got his ball jammed up tight against some wire-netting close to the hole, and hitting it out a great deal harder than it required to be hit, caught my caddie, who was standing at the hole, full in the middle of what it is polite, as well as learned, to call the epigastrium, and, as the poor boy writhed in agony, danced a judicial war dance, claiming the hole. But I still hope Mr. Avory's dinner at the Garrick did not affect Mr. Justice Lawrence as his wire-netting stroke affected my poor caddie. He deserves well of the world for his help in the foundation of the Woking Club.

AT OXFORD.

Mr. Landale continues to prove himself a very good player, and these doings of the University men begin to be of the more interest as the date of the Inter-University match comes very near. He was always winning last term, and he has now just carried off the President's scratch medal at the University with a score of 79. Mr. Gidney, with four strokes allowed him, easily beat Mr. L. B. Smith, who had six, in the final of the match-play tournament for the medal which commemorates poor young Hugh Kirkaldy's term of service as resident professional at Oxford.

THE LONDON AMATEUR FOURSOMES.

Mr. George Brann and Mr. Davenport, representing Home Park in the London Amateur Foursomes, did very well indeed against Mr. S. H. Fry and Mr. Worthington for Mid-Surrey. They played at Woking, and must have had a splendid match. The Mid-Surrey pair were ahead all the way, which makes the losers' fight all the better. The former were as much as five holes ahead at the end of the first round, but by the halfway in the afternoon this lead was cut down to one. The others had a fine chance to make the match all square with a hole to go, but a very possible putt missed made Mid-Surrey dorny, and by winning the last hole they won the match by two. It was a bit of a scramble home for the pair that I picked at the start as, perhaps, more likely to win than any other. There were, however, closer fights than this, and the closeness of the contests cannot fail to enhance the interest of these matches. There was the meeting of two very fine couples at Sunningdale—Mr. A. S. Johnston and Mr. Spencer for Blackheath, with Mr. Mure Ferguson and Mr. Oliver Martin-Smith for New Zealand. They were all level at the end of two rounds, halved the thirty-seventh hole,

and finally the Blackheathens, in this year of their tercentenary, won a glorious victory at the thirty-eighth hole. Two other matches went on to the thirty-seventh hole. One was Burhill v. Banstead, in which Mr. Alfred Tennyson and Mr. Walter Bovill for the former club beat Mr. W. G. Pringle and Mr. R. Williams for the latter, and the other Hindhead v. Wimbledon Park, wherein Mr. W. G. Howarth and Mr. E. C. Lee scored for Hindhead against Mr. F. W. Brown and Mr. E. A. Smirke for Wimbledon Park. It is certainly a great feature and merit of this tournament that it brings into prominence fine players who were not very much known before outside their local clubs, and gives them opportunity for measuring their powers and finding their place among men whose reputation is established.

H. G. H.

ORIGINALITY OF GRIP.

Hackenschmidt, the famous wrestler at present among us, was once induced to try his hand at driving a golf ball. The photograph representing the methods he adopted to drive a tee shot presents an interesting study of original means to arrive at an ordinary golfing end. The muscular figure of the Russian is shown with the right hand gripping the club at the extreme end of the shaft, and the left hand below at the bottom of the leather—the whole width of the leather grip separating the two hands. To the trained golfing eye no possible system which could be adopted to strike the ball appears to be more awkward and unscientific. The local professional had shown Hackenschmidt how to grip the club properly in order to propel the ball to the furthest distance with the full value of the body behind it; but, apparently, the muscular wrestler found the orthodox grip to be unsuitable to his needs as soon as the driver was put in his hands. Thus the athlete who knows "the back trick simply as strong as any man in Illyria" devised a grip of his own in order to make sure that he would strike the ball at all; and he cared little about its unsuitableness and want of grace provided that it was certain. Yet the grip is not so rare as it would seem to be. It has been noticed that many learners, taking up a club for the first time, adopt this grip of the left hand below the right, and there are golfers who brave ridicule by persisting in continuing to handle the club in this way. Their play is often very good and steady, if awkward. A short time ago Mr. J. H. Irons, gripping his club in this way, compiled a brilliant score with a cleek over the Giffnock course, in the West of Scotland. His handicap is plus 3, and in this competition he beat the next player by seven strokes. Originality of grip, therefore, would seem to be no greater barrier to good scoring than it is in helping many players to simplify the difficult art of consistently good putting.

ONE-HANDED PUTTING.

Putting with one hand is one of the variants in the originality of grip. It has received the sanction of Mr. Hilton's high authority. Mr. Hilton has so studiously reasoned out for himself as well as for others the majority of intricate points in the playing of the game, that it is quite certain he has an adequate defence of the one-hand system. He, too, has had to endure much criticism for his originality of method. During the amateur championship at St. Andrews the bulk of the criticism among the players and spectators was unfavourable to Mr. Hilton's one-hand style of putting; but satisfied in his own mind that the one hand was more serviceable on the putting green than two, Mr. Hilton persevered with his new method. Yet there was one experienced and good player present who both defended and commended Mr. Hilton's one-hand system. He was Mr. David Anderson of Monifieth, who had practised the single-hand putting with great success more than twenty years before. Delicacy of touch and accuracy of direction are the two essential features of all good putting; and it is fairly argued in favour of the one-hand style that it gets rid of the constant defect of using both hands by taking away the dragging, pulling power, often unconsciously applied to the club by the left hand. The reason may be obvious enough to the majority of players; but inasmuch as the one-handed system has not been imitated by a large number of players, it would seem that the general body of golfers would rather linger in the paths of error and be orthodox in style than expose themselves as targets for the shafts of ridicule.

"DIFFUGERE NIVES."

No, the snows have not yet disappeared, though the Ode of Horace might wish to tell golfers another and more hopeful tale. A match with one of the Universities had to be postponed at Walton Heath a week ago owing to the snow-covered links, and a coating still remained there for several days afterwards. Winter comes back to the links from time to time to utter a surly growl and to dash from the golfer's hand the bowl of expectant pleasure. We cannot say then, as Horace once sung at the turn of the year, that with the melting snows the sweet herbage is recarpeting our putting greens and that the trees are budding with the resplendent green of the changing season. It is just a little soon, apparently, to hazard the early note of that song of poetic triumph. But now and again the soft south wind touches the cheek with a warmer and more genial breath, inspiring every golfing heart with hope that spring is buffeting winter before it. When that task is achieved, then will the links have their carpeting renewed with richest colouring and softest texture; then will a new joy in life arise when the demon influenza has been exorcised, and no one feels any longer constrained to utter in despondency "*Pulvis et umbra sumus.*"

PROFESSIONAL TOURNAMENT AT NORTH BERWICK.

The new municipal links at North Berwick, lying to the eastward of the town, will be formally opened on June 4th. These are the links which were laid out several years ago on the property of Sir Walter Dalrymple, and were known as the Rhodes course. Just as the majority of golfers who visit St. Andrews cling with stubborn fidelity to the old course, so the visiting golfers from South, North, East and West who flock to North Berwick in the summer and autumn, preferred to take their chance of a less or more varied and prolonged round over the western course there. But the problem of congestion has been as acute since then at North Berwick as it has long been a source of grumbling and danger at St. Andrews; and it has become increasingly imperative that some remedy should be found to accommodate the growing needs of players on the old course. The Town Council of North Berwick promptly took the problem in hand in the interest of the growing welfare of the local community, and the old Rhodes links were acquired as a municipal course. The ground was carefully examined under the best professional advice, and the holes and bunkers were almost entirely remodelled so as to make the play there as good a test as may be procured on any other green in the country. From first to last the Town Council are reported to have spent quite £10,000 on the enterprise. It is intended to inaugurate the opening ceremony by the holding of a great professional tournament on June 4th, and among the names of professionals already sent in are those of Taylor, Vardon, Massy, White, Herd, Rowland Jones, Andrew Kirkaldy, Sayers, *père et fils*, Duncan, Sherlock, Reid and Mayo.

THE GOLFEES' HANDBOOK.

This useful book of reference for club committees, as well as for the general body of golfers, has now reached its tenth year. As the game spreads its literature grows at even a greater pace, and hence this year it is found that this little handbook numbers 1,040 pages. One of the valuable features of the book is the complete list of the decisions given on points of golf law from the institution of the Rules Committee of St. Andrews in 1903 until January this year. Easy reference to points in dispute is helped by an index. The "Who's Who" section, giving biographical details of amateur and professional players, is also an interesting feature which is expanding, while the directory containing the list of clubs and the names of traders associated with the game supplies a great deal of useful information in a concise form. There are photographs given of all the champions, both men and women, for 1907. The photographs in the book include about forty professional players, among them being Massy and Gassiat. The amateurs include Mr. Ball, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Guy Campbell, Mr. V. Pollock, Mr. C. E. Dick and the Earl of Stair, the captain of the Royal and Ancient Club. The handbook is published by the Golf Agency, 8, North Bridge, Edinburgh, and 173, Fleet Street, E.C. A. J. R.

CONCERNING CHAMPIONSHIPS ON METROPOLITAN GREENS.

WE have been hearing a good deal lately about how blessed a thing it would be if we could have the championships of golf (one or other of them, or both) played on a green in the vicinity of London. Sunningdale, Woking and Walton Heath are those which suggest themselves most obviously, but no doubt there are others with less or greater claims, should they care to press them. The principal arguments used by the advocates of this very new departure are that more golf is played on inland than on seaside greens, and for that reason it is not any longer just to regard the seaside golf as typically "golf as she is played," and that an enormous number of people in and about London would come and look on at a championship if it were thus made accessible to them. I have the misfortune to have played golf for a good long time. I played it for many years in which we all regarded golf anywhere but at the seaside as the merest substitute for the real thing. I can lay no claim to any of that inexperience which seems to qualify its possessors to speak with exceeding confidence; and, thus conscious of my own shortcomings, I have still to express my humble but firm opinion that golf even on the best possible inland green is only a kind of amiable imitation of the golf on a seaside links. When it is at its best it is not a bad imitation, and perhaps critics are a little misled by making the comparison between the two kinds of green when both are in their finest condition. This sounds, of course, as if it were an ideally fair way of comparing them, but it is not so, because an inland green is so seldom at its best, as compared with a seaside green. If a drought comes it plays "Old Harry" with the inland course, harrying it a deal more severely than the same evil circumstances can harry the seaside green. Again, if a spell of wet comes, the less sandy soil suffers far more. So, if you appoint a date for a meeting on a seaside green, you know with more or less approach to accuracy in what state you will find that green when the great day comes. On an inland course you cannot be nearly so sure. Total up all that is implied in that consideration, with the fact that even when both are at their best, or even when the seaside green is below its best and the inland at the "top hole," the maritime can still give points, many points, to the other, and the result is the conclusion that it would be a thousand pities to take such an affair as a championship away from the sea, its native air, and carry it inland, to be blighted. And as for the argument that more golf is played on inland greens than on seaside—well, so, too, is more cricket

played on rough fields and unkempt village greens than on made wickets. Does that show cricket on the rough wicket to be the ideal type of the game? Such an argument is silly.

Still, all this is matter of opinion only. One man's folly is another's wisdom. The argument which seems silly to me may seem to another to have come straight from the mind of Solomon. So we will leave that side of the question and go on to a matter of fact. It might or it might not be wise or foolish to hold the championships on a suburban green. It is a question which never will be put to the proof by reason of the matter of fact—that it would be absolutely impossible to hold them there. I am not saying for a moment that they might not be begun. They might be started quite nicely. I am perfectly certain that they could not be completed. It is a curious thing—or perhaps I ought not to say that: it sounds rather ungallant—that the first person to put this side of the question at all clearly, of all those who have corresponded with me about it, is a lady. She writes thus, *à propos* of the first letter published on the subject in these pages: "May I suggest to the gentleman who wants a championship on a London green, that until a links is provided with a grand stand all round, where the spectators could be boxed up out of the way, his idea could hardly be carried out. If a quarter of the golfers he mentioned wished to see the championship, and the sundry other people who know nothing about golf, and yet wanted to look on, had to be accommodated, there would not be much room for the players. I do not fancy he has ever been to a championship near Glasgow or Liverpool."

These plain words seem to me to give, very truthfully and directly, the state of the case which we shall be forced to realise. As it is, near the big towns the crowds which watch the great matches become so large as to be very difficult of management. How much larger they would be in the metropolitan district, and how utterly impossible to manage when swollen by the disorderly element which would be perfectly certain to assemble, it requires a very little use of the imagination to appreciate. Most of those courses are traversed by public roads; some of them are actually public places, where the public have, or at least claim, a right to wander at their own sweet will. Is it to be believed that a championship could be conducted properly, or even at all, in such circumstances? I am obliged, although in all sympathy with the wish of metropolitan golfers to see good golf played at their doors, to think it quite impossible.

H. G. H.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PLAGUE OF MIDGES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Although anti-mosquito measures, such as drainage, treating ditches, etc., with kerosene, and the covering of tanks, might be of service in reducing the number of midges, they are unlikely to do away with the nuisance altogether, since these insects probably breed in any damp places. The only remedies would be to exclude them by fine netting over the windows and to treat exposed parts of the body—*e.g.*, the face and hands—on going to bed with something to prevent them biting. Some of the essential oils, such as those of pennyroyal and lavender, seem to possess this power. The following mixture has been recommended by a well-known authority in India: Oil of bergamot, of cloves and of lavender, of each 2 dr.; oil of turpentine, 1 dr.; rectified spirit, 4 oz.; sulphate of quinine, 10 gr.; sufficient water to make half a pint.—R. T. HEWLETT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In reply to the letter of your correspondent "Anxious," the following points and suggestions may be of some interest. The common midge, known as *Corethra plumicornis*, invariably lays its eggs in water or, at all events, on a damp surface, as indeed do other branches of the chironomidae. These eggs, of which a large number are laid by each female midge, are hatched in from two to three days, and the larvæ develop into the winged insect in about two weeks. The midge lays her eggs either at the edge of a pool or on some water-weed which will eventually be covered with water; if it is a dry season and there is but little water a large number will not pass the stage of larvæ. On the other hand, in a damp season few are destroyed by this means, and, as your correspondent observes, the adult midges are then more numerous. As there are many generations of midges in one season, it is practically impossible to destroy them all, for if some of the breeding-grounds escape, there are millions of larvæ unmolested to develop into the adult midge. I have heard of good results being obtained from paraffin and tar, as in the case of the anopheles of malaria. In all cases where the pest is marked, great care should be taken to empty all vessels containing stagnant water; tanks used for storing rain-water are often swarming with the larvæ, and the difficulty is to destroy the larvæ without spoiling the water for domestic purposes, most of the chemical compounds which would instantly destroy them being for obvious reasons unfit for the purpose. In very dry weather it is best to sacrifice the water and have the tanks thoroughly scoured with a hard brush and ordinary washing soda; in wet weather the sooner the water is used the better. The so-called "traps" of modern drainage should be disinfected every day. If there is no system of water drainage, a solution of perchloride of mercury (corrosive sublimate) of the strength of 1 in 10,000 will be strong enough to destroy the eggs and larvæ. All rubbish heaps, earth closets, etc., should be well sprinkled several times a day with the solution by means

of an ordinary watering-can, which should be used for that purpose only and be fitted with a good "rose." An ordinary can may be used for a long time without being injured by the mercury, provided it be rinsed out each time and the stock solution kept in an earthenware or glass vessel. Of course, the greatest care should be taken, as the corrosive sublimate is very poisonous. As a rule, the pest is most marked when there is a pond or stream within rooyds., and if a large pond, nothing can be done to destroy the larvæ. At the same time, something can be done to obtain relief by washing the face, hands and body with a solution of fir tree oil; about two tablespoonfuls to a bucket of water will be found enough, and it is far from unpleasant. Considerable relief has been obtained from the use of this solution by the writer and also by various friends, who have testified to its efficacy during days of fishing and shooting in the Highlands.—JAMES E. TURLER.

A PERTINENT QUESTION.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The accompanying poem has been written by a working farmer living near us. I hope you will think it good enough to publish in COUNTRY LIFE. Locally we think it a very clever skit, and it exactly describes what we are suffering in Montgomeryshire. The writer shows much talent, we think.—MARGARET J. SCOTT.

"WHO'S TO MILK THE COW?"

The Education question is discussed on every hand,
The law compels to go to school each child throughout the land;
The object of these present lines is to enquire how
Does School Board legislation help the farmer milk the cow?

The value of 'The Higher Education' is admitted,
But the farmer thinks his lot is very greatly to be pitied;
He pays his rates and taxes fads scholastic to endow,
And merely asks reproachfully, 'Who's going to milk the cow?'

He finds it very difficult to get a steady man,
His wife 'Can't get a girl!' and has to do the best she can;
'Girls who can milk are getting scarce,' she says, with troubled brow,
'The rising generation doesn't want to milk the cow.'

And if the children have to work, before and after school,
What time is there for sleep and play? Home-lessons are the rule;
If they're neglected, boys and girls will get into a row,
So it's rather hard on children if they have to milk the cow.

And country girls, on leaving school, type-writers want to be,
Or waitresses or shopgirls, just to get their evenings free,
And take the chances towns afford of an early marriage vow,
So they scorn domestic work, and simply will not milk the cow.

When nearly every country lad aspires to be a clerk,
The farmer thinks the future prospects getting rather dark;
There won't be many left to follow horses and the plough,
And neither girl, boy, man nor woman left to milk the cow.

Let the farmer on the 'Board of Education' have reliance,
No doubt, in course of time, the problem will be solved by science,
His future lot will surely be much happier than now,
When merely 'press the button' is the way to milk the cow.

Already for most purposes machinery is here,
And the farmer soon will have evolved into an engineer;
Meanwhile let him respectfully to Education bow,
And pay his rates and taxes while 'the missis' milks the cow.

Will the Education Board accept a kindly-meant suggestion?
A lot of time's been wasted on the vexed 'Religious Question,'
If the members would agree to put their quarrels 'on the shelf,'
They'd find they'd ample time to teach the cow to milk herself.

C. L."

A PARROT'S DIET.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I shall be much obliged if any of your readers can tell me what is the best all-round food for a blue-fronted Amazon parrot. I have one about four and a-half years old, which since October last has shed a large number of its feathers, and has continued to do so until quite recently, which is a longer period than usual for moulting. The bird is very tame and seems healthy, but his feathers on the back appear "staring" and rough. Since I have had him, about eight months, I have fed him on the usual Spratt's or Hyde's food, which, I understand, he had before I bought him. I have now changed to crushed oats, Indian corn and canary seed, with an occasional bit of boiled potato and some fruit.—R. BENNETT.

[You say the bird has "shed" its feathers, so we take it for granted that it is not a case of what is known as "feather-eating," i.e., the bird is not pulling out the feathers itself. It is not uncommon for birds (especially parrots and other foreign birds) to protract their moult, that is, to be slow in getting their feathers again, and there is also a well-known disease called "French moult," or alopecia, when birds lose their plumage at unseasonable times. Both things are probably due to something like the same conditions, being often accompanied by great visible weakness, which your bird does not appear to show. None the less, it is generally understood that the trouble arises from poor nourishment, and the patients should have plenty of strengthening food. Giving a few drops of Parrish's Chemical Food in the water is often recommended, and also a small amount of sulphur; but before resorting to them we should advise trying bread and milk (give it a little every day, if it takes kindly to it, and make sure the milk is fresh), add some hemp seed to its diet, and give it greenstuff instead of the potato. It will probably soon pick up. If not, try the Parrish.—ED.]

A DETERMINED SINGER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I am much interested in seeing a letter from your correspondent Mrs. M. W. Bourdillon in to-day's issue of COUNTRY LIFE (March 7th, 1908), saying she has noticed a thrush singing while hopping about on the lawn feeding. About a week ago I was attracted by a loud singing just outside the window where I was sitting at work, and, looking up, saw a thrush alternately struggling with a fat worm and bursting into floods of melody. Since then I have repeatedly noticed similar cases, so I do not think it can be very uncommon, though I confess I have never noticed it till this year.—E. P.

[It is unusual, but by no means unprecedented. Thrushes will sometimes sing spasmodically on a level lawn, and not unfrequently appear contented with such slight eminence as a molehill or small mound in a field, from which they will sing persistently and methodically. In the very early part of the year especially they sometimes do not seem to be able to stop singing. A case was reported by our contributor "H. P. R." in COUNTRY LIFE some time ago of a bird which sang without apparent intermission for food or any other purpose, and without leaving one branch of a tree, from early morning of a February day until well after sundown, when it was actually dark. The probability is, in such a case as that reported above, that there is another thrush which shows a disposition to dispute possession of the lawn, and the bird is asserting its right of possession and challenging the other to infringe on it. It is not light-heartedness, but self-assertiveness, "I'm the King of the Castle," as it were.—ED.]

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have read a letter from one of your correspondents in the last issue of your paper with regard to thrushes singing while on the ground, and it is a somewhat peculiar incident that all through the spring of last year and during the present season we have had a thrush in our garden which does precisely the same thing. This is the only case of a thrush singing on the ground that I have ever observed.—MABEL HENDERSON, Clifton.

NESTING-BOXES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In the neighbourhood of Clitheroe in Lancashire there are few more interesting personalities than Mr. Thomas Altham, who is recognised far and wide as an authority on bird-life. A visit to Mr. Altham's residence at



Bashall Hall, Clitheroe, at this time of the year is almost certain to find him making nest-boxes, such as may be seen in the accompanying illustration, for every variety of birds. There are boxes for tits, great and small, for tree-creepers, for juncos, for tawny and barn owls, for kestrels, starlings, song-thrushes and blackbirds, robins, wagtails, woodpeckers, pied flycatchers and others too numerous to mention. The feature of these boxes is their perfectly natural appearance. For the most part, the boxes are made from stumps of branches hollowed out and having a small hole bored as an entrance. They are covered with bark; anything approaching the artificial, with a tendency to drive the birds away, is tabooed. Mr. Altham's complete knowledge of the habits of birds enables him to fashion his nests in the most natural manner possible. One gentleman to whom he supplied two dozen told him that out of twenty-two he visited afterwards no fewer than nineteen were tenanted.—O. L.

[It is scarcely necessary to again point out that the appearance of the boxes does not affect the birds nearly as much as it does the eye of the owner of the garden.—ED.]

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The keeper of a small hotel on the shores of Loch Gail, who is a great bird-lover, told me that he could not at first make out why no starlings took advantage of the nest-boxes which he had put on the wall of his house. At last he discovered that these birds are rather particular about having plenty of alighting room, and as soon as he put up a good long box it was taken possession of at once, and has never since been without its pair of starlings. The shorter boxes, which he puts up for other birds, are never occupied by starlings, although big enough to hold them comfortably.—FLEUR-DE-LYS.

A DRAMA OF THE UNDERWORLD.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have received from a friend an account of an incident of such unusual interest, at least so it appears to me, that I venture to send it to you in the hope that some of your many country readers may perhaps be able to make enquiries whether anything of the sort has been witnessed by other people. My friend writes to me that a short time ago, on a fine still morning, he was sitting

on a stile at the corner of one of his coverts, smoking his pipe and admiring the landscape before him. Presently he heard a rustling in the dry leaves inside the covert, and immediately afterwards a fine cock pheasant ran out of the wood and stopped short within about a yard of its edge, in an attitude of eager watching. Close behind him a stoat appeared, and p used for a moment to sniff the air and look round for what it had evidently been pursuing. Like a flash the pheasant was on him and, either by luck or skill, killed him with one stroke of his spurs. My friend adds that, the deed accomplished, the plucky bird rattled his wings and challenged all creation with his triumphant crow before he betook himself off into the wood from which he had come. It seems to me that not only did the bird show great courage, but unusual intelligence as well, for, as the events occurred, he must have reasoned it out for himself that if he got out in the open and waited for his foe, he would be able to make his "jump" to strike unimpeded by any branches or briars, and that his chance would come immediately the stoat appeared. His pluck is evident, for, of course, he could have taken refuge in flight at any moment. I hope you may consider this of sufficient interest to find a place in the columns of your paper.—X. L.

THE TRAGEDY OF CONNAUGHT SQUARE.

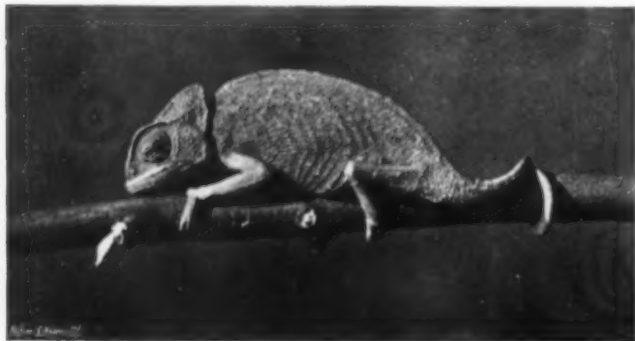
[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—Just at this time two years ago a small party of rooks were building and repairing their nests in Connaught Square. The previous year the nests had numbered seven, but there were then three fresh couples, making a colony of ten nests. The rooks had settled there a few years ago in consequence of being disturbed from the old St. George's burial-ground close by, whither they had migrated, as I believe, several years ago, from the larger rookery which used to exist in Kensington Gardens. But just as the nests were ready and the time came for laying their eggs a sad occurrence took place. One of the birds got his foot entangled in a piece of string, and this catching on a branch of one of the trees, the poor bird was unable to get free, and remained suspended until some humane person ended his agony by shooting him. But the carcass still remained hanging by the string for several weeks, and the remainder of the colony took alarm and went off to some other quarters. Whither they betook themselves or whether they nested again that year I cannot discover, and the object of this letter is to enquire whether any of your readers can give information. As proof of the soundness of the construction of their nests, they remained there after two years, apparently undamaged, and yesterday I saw them in occupation of a number of starlings, who appeared inclined to appropriate them.—RUS IN URBE.

CHAMELEONS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—The enclosed photographs, taken by Mr. B. H. Bentley, show a South African chameleon in the active and passive moods. In the active one



(active, that is, for a chameleon) he shows his queer faculty of puffing himself out when he is annoyed and wants to look ferocious, from which he got his reputation of being able to live on air. "The chameleon Love can feed on air," says Shakespeare; but, as a matter of fact, in Nature the creatures live on flies and other insects. They have the power of going a very long time without food, but can eat a prodigious quantity of flies when flies enough are forthcoming. The young chameleon is able to catch flies as soon as it is born, or, at least, not many minutes afterwards — catching them by shooting out its tiny tongue with just as good an aim as its parents. The young, however, do not seem to have the faculty of changing colour at first, being of a mottled grey. Whether the colour-cells in the skin are not properly developed at first, or whether they are not fully under the control of its nervous system, I do not know. In its passive mood, the chameleon is very passive indeed, remaining as motionless as a dab of mud for hours and days at a stretch, the only part that shows the smallest inclination to activity being the queer

circular eyelid which covers the eye. Although the chameleon is always used as a symbol of changefulness and variety, it is really the very incarnation of imperturbable repose.—R. P. H.

CLAY PLAYING FIELDS.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—I should be very glad to know if any of your readers have had experience of a hockey ground on clay soil, which is difficult to get dry during the winter. In our case we have a ditch cut at each side of the ground, but this is not sufficient to prevent the ground being swampy in parts. To put sufficient agricultural drain-pipes over the ground would be too expensive. If there is some other method which has been tried successfully, known to any of your readers, it would be a great help to us to have particulars.—EUSTACE ERLEBACH.

[We fear nothing but draining will prove satisfactory, and if the clay is stiff, shallow drains.—ED.]

DOG-BREAKING.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—I have been interested in the correspondence about the breaking-in of dogs. Can any of your readers tell me how to cure the great fault of puppy-hood, namely, scavenging. My nine months old puppy is never well unless kept closely muzzled. I have been told it is the desire for salt; is this so? and is there no treatment which will cure a dog of this habit?—B. W.

[Our correspondent does not mention the breed of her puppy; but we have found that constant variety of food coupled with exercise goes far to remedy this tendency.—ED.]

THE PARK OF CHESTNUT TREES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—The bole of a chestnut tree in COUNTRY LIFE of February 22nd shows a characteristic which, I have observed, is generally very clearly marked—that is, a "right-hand" twist in the corrugations of the trunk. Will you kindly tell me whether this is a recognised feature, or, rather, a law of growth, in the horse-chestnut?—F. M.

[The chestnut tree figured in COUNTRY LIFE of February 22nd is a sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), not the horse-chestnut (*Æsculus Hippocastanum*). The corrugated bark is characteristic of the sweet chestnut, and the twist in the bark is frequently met with, though it cannot be said to be a distinctive mark of the tree. The bark of the horse-chestnut is moderately smooth on young trees, and peels off in flakes on old examples.—ED.]

WEYLAND SMITH'S CAVE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—Here is an interesting photograph of Weyland Smith's Cave, a monument of remote antiquity, in the parish of Ashbury on the borders of Berkshire. The origin is wrapped in mystery; but there is a mention in an Anglo-Saxon document, a deed of conveyance of the estate previous to the Norman Conquest, in which it is called "Weland's Smithy or forge." Some believe it



to be the burial-place of King Borsleg, who was slain at Æscendine; but the local tradition is that if a traveller passing along the ancient ridgeway should be in perplexity on account of his horse having lost a shoe, he had only to take the horse to the cave, supposed to be inhabited by an invisible smith, there place a groat on the copestone and withdraw to a distance. He would find on his return his animal properly shod, the money taken away, but no human being within sight. The tradition gave rise to one of the most impressive scenes in Sir Walter Scott's novel of "Kenilworth."—C. MASON.